THE MURDEROUS WOMAN:

MADNESS IN FOUR MODERN WESTERN AND CHINESE STORIES BY WOMEN

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論文摘要

「瘋狂」這個主題一直以來都從未在西方或中國的文壇上缺席過。在西方的十九世紀及中國的二十世紀以前，「瘋狂」這個名詞的闡釋及其在文學上的表述，都是被男性作家及男性觀點所壟斷。在他們的基準下，「瘋狂」的解述主要分爲二個範疇。針對女性而言，「瘋狂」被認爲是一種女性特有的病症，反映了她們情緒不穩、容易波動的特性；又或被認定是女性未能或不願履行她們應盡的義務的結果。但就男性而言，他們的「瘋狂」卻被解說成一種已獲得更高真理的表現。在西方，這種以男權至上的闡述方法，一直被沿襲至十九世紀中後期才逐步被推翻。自十九世紀中葉以來，西方文壇上出現了不少女性作家，她們試圖對「瘋狂」這個名詞提出新的解釋，並在解說的過程中融入她們自己目的性的見解，同時亦賦予這個名詞一個新的女性範疇，顯示了她們如何能將「瘋狂」演變成一種女性反抗並解構父權制的文本策略。

在《婦女・瘋狂・英國文化》一書中，萊恩・肖瓦爾特將西方文學上的瘋婦形象歸納爲三大類，即自殺的奧菲麗亞，感傷的瘋子簡，和凶猛[殺人]的露西亞。雖云女性與「瘋狂」的微妙及緊密關係源建自西方，但自五四運動後，不少自省的女性作家紛紛在中國文壇上冒起，「婦女與瘋狂」這個論題亦漸受注目。近年來，女性謀殺男性或婦人殺夫的問題再度引起社會及學術界的關注，一些內容描述女性如何在被社會欺壓的情況下通過謀殺來反抗強權的文學作品，亦再廣爲中、西方學術界所發掘和探討。因應這股趨勢，本論文亦選擇了萊恩・肖瓦特所介定的第三類瘋婦形象 – 兇猛的[殺人的]瘋婦，作爲討論的重點。

本論文的主要目的，是研究「瘋狂」在作爲一種中、西方女性現代文學中的反抗力量和文本策略時，其背後所隱含的文化理念和意識形態。

本文以殺人的瘋婦形象作討論重點，探討女性如何透過破壞性的行動來表達她們對男權壓迫的忿怒和反抗，並深入了解女性力量的加強以及女性的囚牢

與「瘋狂」之間的相互關係。

本文將就「瘋婦殺人」這個主題在現代女性文學中的表述作誇文化的討論和比較，並將比較分成兩組。第一組比較英國女作家吉蒂•弗斯格蘭的《瑪治》和大陸女作家鐵凝的《午後懸崖》，主題爲「殺人的瘋狂女兒」。第二組則比較美國女作家艾沙•理雲的《我•安娜》和台灣女作家李昂的《殺夫》，主題是「殺人的瘋狂妻子」。通過對這兩組中、西方女性現代文學作品的比較，本文希望在「殺人的瘋狂女兒」和「殺人的瘋狂妻子」這兩個主題上就父權社會下的父女間的權力關係和夫妻間的性政治予盾作重點性的深入分析。

要以文字去表述「瘋狂」，即一種錯亂的精神狀態，並非易事。本文所討論的四位中、西方女作家，便承擔了這項挑戰，並通過創造反叛、反傳統的瘋婦角色，來建構一個新的「瘋狂」世界，同時爲「瘋狂」二字的解釋注入新的元素。對於這些女作家而言，女性的「瘋狂」已不應再純粹被認爲是女性被男權欺壓的結果，它更可被視作一種反抗強權的力量和策略。然而，雖云這些作家揭示了女性瘋狂和殺人的力量，但她們亦同時隱露了女性通過這種方式來自救和反抗的限制。相對於中國的女作家而言，西方的女作家似乎在婦解的問題上採取了較樂觀的態度。但與此同時，她們亦跟中國的女作家一樣，認爲通過「瘋狂」來反抗男權暴力只是權宜之計，而非長遠之策。要解決性別衝突的問題，必須從根本的觀念上入手。如果我們仍繼續將父權制的政治話語奉若神明，則女性的真正解放將了無出路，而只有落得訴諸「瘋狂」和「暴力」的下場。

Abstract

The theme of madness has never been absent from both Western and Chinese literatures. Before the 19th century in the West and 20th Century in China, the interpretation and literary representation of madness are predominantly male-authored and male-centered. Madness is either conceived as an exclusively female malady, labeling women's susceptibility to distress and emotional frustration and their failure in conforming to her "feminine responsibility," or in men's case, a metonym implying the presence of higher truth. In the West, it was not until the late 19th century that the term "madness" was given new interpretations by women writers who appropriated literary insanity for their own ends and endowed it with specifically female parameters, showing how madness could be used as resistance and strategy for both the writers and their literary figures to deconstruct patriarchal normality.

In *Female Malady*, Elaine Showalter identifies three types of madwoman in literature: the suicidal Ophelia, the sentimental Crazy Jane, and the violent [murderous] Lucia. Although the quintessential association between woman and madness is primarily a Western construction, with the emergence of more women writers who are conscious of the necessity to speak for their own sex in the Chinese literary scene since the May-Fourth Movement, the representation of female neurosis in patriarchal society has become a particular concern. Man-slaughtering by women has re-attracted social and scholarly attention recently, in which literary texts depicting oppressed women in society and their taking revenge by murdering their oppressors are being rediscovered and reexamined in both the West and China. This thesis, based on Showalter's model, will focus on the discussion of the third type of madwoman – the murderer.

The purpose of this thesis is to examine the ideological implications of "madness" as resistance and also as a strategy in modern Western and Chinese female

writings. Using the image of hysterical murderous woman as an example of feminine madness, this thesis aims at exploring how female anger and protest against patriarchal oppression is expressed through the act of destruction, and how the theme of female madness and murder is focused particularly on the connection between madness and female confinement, as well as madness and female empowerment.

My discussion of the madwoman as murderer draws on a cross-cultural comparison between Kitty Fitzgerald's *Marge* and Tie Ning's *The Cliff in the Afternoon*; Elsa Lewin's *I, Anna* and Li Ang's *The Butcher's Wife*. Through comparing and contrasting these two groups of works, I aim at delineating two types of murderous madwoman – "the murderous daughter" and "the murderous wife" – as a means of investigating the theme of woman, madness and murder in two different frameworks – the father-daughter dynamics and husband-wife sexual politics.

To write about a mental condition of derangement is not an easy task. Western and Chinese women writers, like Kitty Fitzgerald, Elsa Lewin, Tie Ning and Li Ang, have taken up the challenge and recreate the world of madness through their rebellious female protagonists, in which madness is no longer regarded merely as a result of patriarchal victimization, but also used as resistance against patriarchal authority. Nevertheless, it should also be noted that while the writers have employed "madness" and "murder" as metaphors for female anger and protest, they also address the limitations of female empowerment and emancipation through these means. Although the Western writers treated in this thesis seem to have a more optimistic vision towards the possibility of female liberation, they, together with the Chinese writers, also assume that escape through insanity and revolt through destruction is tenuous and is not a long-term strategy in tackling the gender conflict. Indeed, it is not possible for the conflict of gender to be resolved if the domination of patriarchal discourse still pertains, leaving women no expressive outlet but madness and violence.

CONTENTS

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Chapter One

Introduction

This thesis investigates the subject of "madness" and "murder," which is significant both in women's literature and in feminist literary criticism. "Madness" is not merely a medical term referring to a mental illness. It can also be gender-related and loaded with rich ideological and social meanings. The purpose of this thesis is to examine the ideological implications of "madness" as resistance and also as a strategy against patriarchal culture in modern Western and Chinese female writings. Using the image of hysterical murderous woman as an example of female madness, this thesis aims at exploring how female anger and protest against patriarchal oppression is expressed through the act of destruction, focusing particularly on the connection between madness and female confinement, as well as madness and female empowerment.

In *Female Malady*, Elaine Showalter classifies images of the madwoman in literature into three types: the suicidal Ophelia, the sentimental Crazy Jane, and the violent Lucia (10). These three images are the prototypes of the representations of female malady in Western literature. Ophelia's madness is associated with femininity and irrationality, as her madness drives her to commit suicide. Crazy Jane, originally taken from Mathew "Monk" Lewis in 1793, exhibits an image of feminine emotional vulnerability as she is driven mad by the failure of love relationship. While Crazy Jane is sentimentally indulgent and harmless, Lucy, her violent counterpart (from Walter Scott's novel *The Bride of Lammermoor* (1819)), represents female madness as violent reaction against men. Prevented from marrying her lover and forced into a more socially acceptable alliance, Lucy murders the bridegroom on their wedding

night. This female escape from the bondage of femininity into an empowering and violent madness is a recurrent theme in Western literature.[1]

Based on Showalter's model of the three prototypes of madwoman, this thesis focuses on the discussion of the third type – the murderous madwoman. Man-slaughtering or the murdering of husbands by women has re-attracted social and scholarly attention recently. Literary texts depicting oppressed women in society and their taking revenge by murdering their oppressors are being rediscovered and reexamined in the West. In a growing body of feminist texts in the Chinese literary scene, a similar motif of man-killing has also appeared. The prototype of the "murderous madwoman," as represented in both Western and modern Chinese women's literature, emphasizes madness in relation to female confinement as well as empowerment. On the one hand, female madness, which is usually conceptualized by feminist writers in terms of sexual politics, is largely portrayed as a result of the menacing patriarchal social system which sometimes suppresses and victimizes women, confining them to extreme stereotypes and depriving them of their own sense of self – that is, of their subjectivity, autonomy and creativity. Culture and society which effectuate patriarchal exploitation thus become the causal agents in women's mental illness. On the other, the theme of female madness also expresses women's awareness of their restrictive environment and their refusal to accept their maltreatment. In the oppressive social environment where women are given no means of protest and self-affirmation, madness will sometimes take over and become their specific mode of expression, representing their refusal to enter the world of "patriarchal normality" and their resistance against the source of oppression. When the victimized woman can no longer bear the patriarchal brutality, murder, as a socially and morally forbidden action, is desired and eventually enacted, through which she

executes the source of oppression. Destructiveness becomes an outlet for female rage, and womanhood becomes capable of metamorphosis from an angel to a demon, from a docile woman to a violent murderer.

Since there has not been a full consensus on the causes or diagnoses of mental derangement, it seems difficult to give the phenomenon a precise and conclusive definition. As the main purpose of this study is not to diagnose the subject of madness in detailed medical or psychiatric terms but to address the treatment and representation of it in literature, I would use the term in its loosest sense to refer to the range of mental conditions in which what is accepted as normal behavior is suspended or disrupted, while the behavior of the mad person is judged by prevailing standards of logical thought and relevant emotion as confused and inappropriate.

It is not by chance that in Western culture, hysteria or madness was originally and is still generally conceived as an exclusively female malady. Phyllis Chesler, supported by extensive documentation, remarks in her book, *Women and Madness* that "since clinicians and researchers, as well as their patients and subject, adhere to a masculine standard of mental health, women, by definition, are viewed as psychiatrically impaired – whether they accept or reject the female role – simply because they are women" (145). According to Chesler and other feminists, traditional psychology and psychotherapy, especially since Freud, are exclusively modelled in male terms, being both the products and defenses of the status quo – a patriarchal society. Clinicians, as Chesler notes, "were still being taught that women suffer from penis envy, are morally inferior to men, innately masochistic, dependent, passive, heterosexual, and monogamous ... it was mothers – not fathers, genetic predisposition, accidents, and/or poverty – who caused neurosis and psychosis" (1997: 1). Gemaine Greer, in *The Female Eunuch*, also proclaims: "Freud is the father of

psychoanalysis. It has no mother" (92). Such a parentage originates a double standard for mental health: not only that women are generally believed to be more susceptible to mental illness, but what is considered normal and desirable behavior for men is thought to be psychotic for women. A normal woman is often defined by social standard as the housewife content with passivity and authenticity. If a woman attempts to transcend her assigned role, she would possibly be categorized as abnormal or even mad. In other words, "woman's inability to adjust to or to be contented by feminine roles has been considered as a deviation from 'natural' female psychology rather than as a criticism of such roles" (Chesler 1971: 251). Besides, madness is also treated as a woman's personality, labelling certain stereotypical feminine emotional attributes such as susceptibility to distress and emotional frustration. "Madness," as most feminists see it, is a political event employed in sexist politics, connoting pejorative implications accumulated in a society full of prejudices against women. Female insanity, they argue, can in a majority of cases be explained by the oppression of women in a power-structured, male-supremacist society.

The treatment of madness is a significant thematic concern in Western literary history. However, this tradition in literature, like most literary conventions in the past, was predominantly male-authored and male-centered and therefore its archetypes do not apply equally to women and men. For instance, while man's madness could be regarded as a metonym implying the presence of higher truth, or alternatively as a metaphor for deep inspiration, the female lunatic is condemned for possessing a dangerous knowledge or desire, which rejects her "feminine responsibility." In order to recover, she needs the help from "masculine authority."[2] It was not until the late 19th century, when more writers, particularly women writers, have devoted themselves to give a new picture to the issue of women derangement, that the term "madness" is

given "innovative" interpretations.[3] Detaching themselves from the male-dominated literary canon, numerous women writers have appropriated literary insanity for their own ends and endowed it with specifically female parameters, showing how madness can be used as a resistance as well as a strategy to deconstruct patriarchal normality. Female madness, according to these writers, represents both the images of feminine repression as well as feminist expression.

Is the quintessential association between woman and madness an exclusively Western construction? The origin of hysteria, which is a kind of female mental illness, can be dated back as early as 1900 B.C. when an Egyptian papyrus first described the malady. Fifteen hundred years later in the writings of Hippocrates, it was named, and its name succinctly conveyed its etiology. Instead of semantic translation, "hysteria" is transliterated into Chinese as 歇斯底里, which does not carry any Chinese concept or ideological meaning. It shows that "hysteria" is an imported Western idea which has no correlative in the native Chinese tradition. Nevertheless, although the term "hysteria" is an imported idea in China and that the combined subject of woman, madness and literature is essentially a Western construction, with the emergence of more women writers in the Chinese literary scene since the May-Fourth Movement, the representation of female madness in patriarchal society has also become a particular concern in China.

With the finding of the Republic, women's equal rights in work and education are constitutionally protected in China. In reality, however, their problems are still largely ignored. It is chiefly because women's issues in China have always been related to the political ideologies of the state. The May-Fourth Movement in 1919, for instance, though initiated and supported vigorously women's movement in society, had overlooked the real interest of women in general because of its nationalistic and

political preoccupation. Nevertheless, it could not be denied that with the emergence of women's movements in China, there opens up a new era in which more women writers are conscious of the necessity to speak for their own sex. Their writings, particularly since the post-Mao era, add quality to quantity in constituting a powerful literary undercurrent apart from the male-authored mainstream. The subject of madness, which has not been consciously associated with gender issues before the 20th century, has undergone conceptual changes in Chinese intellectual and literary canon, in which the concern with the representation of female neurosis in patriarchal society has become more weighty. Wang Dewei 王德威 [David Wang], in his essay, "Modern 'Ghost' Talk of 'Women' Writers" 「女」作家的現代「鬼」話 ['Nu' zhuo jia de xian dai 'gui' hua], characterizes modern Chinese women writers from Zhang Ailing 張愛玲 [Eileen Chang] to Su Weizhen 蘇偉貞 as a generation of "female ghosts and madwomen" and the plot of madwoman as a "tale of a woman's quest for self-definition" (Wang 228-236).

Since the subject of madness has drawn continuous concern from both Western and Chinese writers, I propose to investigate how gender issues have influenced the representation of madness in Western and Chinese women's writings. By delineating the prototype of "murderous madwoman," I intend to explore the subject of madness and murder, and its social and cultural implications. I have, for this study, selected two pairs of works, by and about women, from Western and Chinese literature – they are Kitty Fitzgerald's *Marge* (1984) and Tie Ning's 鐵凝 *Wu hou xuanya* 午後懸崖 [The cliff in the afternoon] (1998); Elsa Lewin's *I, Anna* (1984) and Li Ang's 李昂 *Shafu* 殺夫 [The butcher's wife] (1983). Although writers like Kitty Fitzgerald and Elsa Lewin might not be regarded as the leading figures in the female literary canon of their respective national literature and that their works might not be as popular as those

of the other recognized feminist writers, the literary solitude of them is dissipated by the very fact that they have chosen to write on a topic that is both significant and important in women's literature. What gives the authors and their narratives important literary significance is their portrayal of unconventional heroines, by that they have posed a challenge to the traditional ideas about women. Their works are chiefly about female madness, in which they depict insanity in relation to sexual politics, illuminating the belief that female madness, to a large extent, is connected to the social and cultural imprisonment of women. The female protagonists in these fictions are all initially powerless. They suffer from the turmoil of male brutal exploitations and are gradually driven mad or become hysterical. Their intense desperation and rage are eventually channelled into a murderous wish, which is finally actualized. Through the enactment of the destructive act, their rage is relinquished and the patriarchal social order, on a symbolic level, is subverted.

At the first glance, it seems that my selection of the Western and Chinese works is arbitrary, since their authors differ widely from one another in terms of their cultural and historical background. Kitty Fitzgerald is an English writer and Elsa Lewin is an American. Tie Ning comes from Mainland China and Li Ang is from Taiwan. However, despite the vast historical, geographical and personal differences, as mentioned above, they are bind together by one common thing – their works have attested to a thematic affinity, in which they all explore gender conflict in terms of the desperate struggle of a murderous woman. The madwoman's testimonies in all these stories constitute a severe attack on patriarchal relations, indicting the menace of fathers and husbands in persecuting the life of mothers, daughters and wives. Female madness, according to these writers, is not merely a result of patriarchal oppression, but also a particular response for the victimized woman to confront the patriarchal

culture. Each novel presents a criticism of the patriarchal political and social system, a universe dominated by masculine energy, within which women are victimized. Instead of making their heroines conform to the patriarchal oppressors, these writers let them "go mad." Through madness, the heroines gain revengeful power. The murderous act they ultimately carry out, as the authors imply, represents a mode of protest in which the heroines take on a life of their own, killing not only their victimizers physically but simultaneously the patriarchal values and laws they symbolize.

My discussion of the madwoman as murderer draws on a cross-cultural comparison between Kitty Fitzgerald's *Marge* and Tie Ning's *The Cliff in the Afternoon*; Elsa Lewin's *I, Anna* and Li Ang's *The Butcher's Wife*. Through comparing and contrasting these two groups of works, I aim at delineating two types of murderous madwoman – "the murderous daughter" and "the murderous wife" – as a means to investigate the theme of women, madness and murder in two different frameworks – the father-daughter dynamics and husband-wife sexual politics.

Before going into the analysis of these works, Chapter Two will be devoted to a detailed discussion of how the meanings of madness develop and change in both Western and Chinese intellectual and literary history. The subsequent two chapters will discuss each type of the murderous women respectively.

Chapter Three, namely "Madwoman as the Murderous Daughter," will base on Kitty Fitzgerald's *Marge* and Tie Ning's *The Cliff in the Afternoon* and explore gender conflict mainly in terms of father-daughter and mother-daughter relationships. Since both of these stories are characterized by their representations of the oppressive father figure and repressive mother figure, exploring the complexity of the daughter's conflict with her father and her intricate relationship with her mother becomes an

important step towards understanding the psychological drama of the murderous daughter. Through portraying the frustration of the daughter in confronting menacing patriarchy symbolized in the father figure, both stories demonstrate how patriarchal authority characterizes English and Chinese cultures in destructive ways. The Western and Chinese daughters in the stories, being haunted by the menacing father-figures, carry out a "murder," which in fact takes up a collective and ritual characteristic – the killing of the men they have chosen means the evacuation of the haunting father, and in a deeper sense, the destruction of patriarchal oppression.

Chapter Four discusses "The Madwoman as the Murderous Wife." This section will explore gender conflicts mainly in terms of husband and wife relationship. In both *I, Anna* and *The Butcher's Wife*, though the haunting father figure is absent, the oppressive power he represents is incarnated into the husband figure whose exploitative power is even more menacing. While in *Marge* and *The Cliff in the Afternoon* the source of oppression comes from the daughter's predestined tie to her biologically aligned authority – her father, the menace in *I, Anna* and *The Butchers Wife* centralizes in the social institution – the marriage system. The daughter's frustration with her father is inescapable since they are tied with blood relationship, the marriage system as presented by both writers, however, provides no way out for women but entraps them into further victimization. In the stories, the husband-wife relationship is never the communication of love and care, but is based on the woman's submission to the man. Through portraying the depreciation of a woman under the usurping marriage system which institutionalizes male dominance and female submission, both authors criticize severely the prejudiced gender construction of society. The murder of the "husband" by the "mad wife," in this sense, represents the attempt of the victimized female to subvert sexually prejudiced social institutions.

After the analysis of these two pairs of works in which focus would be placed particularly on the relationship between madness and female confinement as well as female empowerment, I will delineate the differences and similarities between the Western and Chinese women writers in their representation of the subject of woman, madness and murder, and the cultural implications behind their differences.

In order to make the project manageable, this thesis limits itself in its spatial and temporal dimensions – examples are taken from only four writers (one English, one American and two Chinese) in modern times. As a matter of fact, treatments of madness by various writers from different times and places are so varied and complicated that it is impossible for this thesis to cover all varieties. The examples being taken in this thesis are only meant to demonstrate one prototype of female insanity (the murderous madwoman) and some significant ideas about it.

To write about a mental condition of derangement is not an easy task. To present through language and in an aesthetically viable form the inarticulate ground of mental disease involves highly cultivated literary mastery. Western and Chinese women writers, like Kitty Fitzgerald, Elsa Lewin, Tie Ning and Li Ang, have taken up the challenge and recreate the world of madness through their rebellious heroines. Throughout many centuries of our patriarchal history, it has become commonplace to view intractable women – women resistant to the patriarchal notions which have "reasonably" determined their places and identities – as mad. As writers, they try to deconstruct such stereotyping of women by creating their own narratives, through which they unlock the madwoman within the male-dominated canon and give her voice, so that her hidden torment and indignation can be articulated. By refusing to place their madwomen as victims of mental disease and clinical labeling, they succeed in transforming the state of "madness" from association with patienthood and

pathology into a sharp weapon against the oppression of the patriarchal world. In other words, "madness," as exemplified by the four writers, is no longer merely a disease victimizing women, but also a strategy against the patriarchal authority. Nevertheless, although the writers have employed "madness" and "murder" as the metaphors for female anger and protest, they also address the limitations of female empowerment and emancipation through these means. Apart from the English writer Kitty Fitzgerald who tends to romanticize the potential of madness in empowering and emancipating women, to the other writers, liberation through madness and murder only operate on a fantasy level and the relief they provide is tenuous.[4] To these writers, it is true that female rebellion through madness and murder can to some extent subvert the patriarchal oppression. Nevertheless, they also believe that escape through insanity and revolt through destruction would not be a long-term and plausible strategy in tackling the gender conflict. Instead, a thorough reexamination of the gender norms would be necessary. We have seen the developments of women's movements first in the West and then in China in the past two centuries, which alarm us to re-think the notion of gender. However, we cannot expect any progress in resolving the gender conflict if society continues to define femininity in terms of male norms and leaves women no option of expression but madness and destruction.

Chapter Two

Ideological Implications of "Madness" in Western and Chinese Culture

"Madness has been a continuous theme in Western literature from its beginnings to the present time," Lillian Feder states in *Madness in Literature*, in which she adeptly demonstrates how the theme of madness has been represented in Western culture (3). Writers as early as Aeschylus, Sophocles, Plato, Homer, had contained in their works the myths and legends symbolizing various forms of insane thought and behaviour. Although the history of literary representation of madness has experienced different stages of developments and changes, from the earliest extant myths until the beginning of the nineteenth century, the tradition was predominantly male-authored and male-centered, where the interpretations of madness did not apply equally to women and men. In ancient Greek philosophy and drama, madness was regarded as both sickness and divine influence, indicating a blessing and an inducement to prophecy and poetry (Feder 6). For instance, in Plato's *Timaeus*, his madman is prophetic and endowed with vision. Similarly, the one in his *Phaedrus* is led through suffering and penance to sacred completion of his experience. In reconstructing the history of madness in Western civilization, Michel Foucault, in his work *Madness and Civilization*, suggests that before the seventeenth century, madness was associated with divine inspiration; it was a means of perceiving ultimate truth. Therefore, mad people held a privileged position in society, roaming wherever they wished. Beginning in the age of reason, however, madness was experienced as unreason, as the perilous reversal of reason, and hence required institutional confinement. Ultimately, institutions suppressed madness so as to "eliminate from

the social order a figure which did not find its place within" (115-116). Although Foucault has delicately addressed the historical development of the meaning of madness in Western civilization, and his critique of the institutional power of society in oppressing humanity is distinctive, his discussion has not taken the gender issue into account. As Elaine Showalter states, "while he brilliantly exposed the repressive ideologies that lay behind the reform of the asylum, Foucault did not explore the possibility that the irrationality and difference the asylum silenced and confined is also the feminine" (6). As suggested by Showalter, there is a fundamental equation between femininity and insanity in Western culture. While the male madness can be regarded as embodying higher truth or deeper vision, the female madness is constantly interpreted negatively. For instance, "hysteria," as a form of mental illness, is predominantly associated with women. From the ancient times through the nineteenth century, women suffering variously from choking, feelings of suffocation, partial paralysis, convulsions similar to those of epilepsy, aphasia, numbness, and lethargy, were said to be ill of hysteria, caused by a wandering womb.[1] Since the reproductive system was considered the source of mental illness in women, women were believed to be the prime carriers of madness, and were much more susceptible to mental problem than men.[2] During the Renaissance, hysteria was also called "the mother," a metaphor of woman in general, as she was regarded as a creature destined for the strenuous bodily labours of childbearing and childrearing but physically weaker than man. Moreover, woman was regarded as temperamentally and morally infirm, in which her womb was the sign and source of her weakness. The various symptoms associated with hysteria were believed to be bespeaking woman's capricious nature. And the remedy – a husband and regular sexual intercourse – declared the necessity for male control of this volatile female element.[3] This might well explain why while

the madness of King Lear is read positively as a catalyst enabling him to attain deeper inspiration and higher truth, the madness of Lady Macbeth is negatively interpreted as the result of her excessive desire and roaring ambition.

This tradition of associating woman negatively with mental illness prevails for centuries. Philip W. Martin, in his book *Mad Women in Romantic Writing*, provides an historical account of how woman and madness are represented in the Western literary tradition, particularly during the Romantic period. He maintains that romantic writings tended to assign the derangement of women to their congenital weakness, overlooking the fact that women's suffering from economic insecurity could also be the cause of their illness. According to Martin, female madness in some romantic writings was either presented as a consequence of the failure of her private and or secret emotional life (such as disappointment in love affair), or as the imbalance of her passions, since women were generally regarded to be more susceptible to distress and emotional frustration. A woman had to depend on the protection of a man in order to live "normally" and a madwoman could only recover with the help of man (1-27). Such readings of female derangement embodied an interpretative prejudice that constantly set man's fortitude and rationality against woman's vulnerability and lack of control.

Freud was the one who relocated the cause of hysteria from the womb to the head, and who claimed that the strangely disparate physical symptoms of hysteria were in fact symbolic representations of unconscious mental conflict. He believed that "the causes of hysterical disorders [were] to be found in the intimacies of the patients' psychosexual life, and that hysterical symptoms are the expression of their most secret and repressed wishes" (Freud Vol. II: 7). Freud's psychoanalytic formulations of mental processes and his use of literary examples to illuminate psycho-dynamic

question have inspired the development of a large body of psychoanalytic, psychological, and literary theories in literature. His theories, however, have been held by a majority of feminist writers, psychologists, and philosophers as culpable, mainly because he grounded sexual differentiation in the cultural primacy of the phallus and views the development of gender from the standpoint of a son, as governed primarily by relationship with the father. A series of authorities, beginning with psychiatrist Karen Horney in the 1920s, have concerned themselves with a refutation of such Freudian theories as the female castration complex and the vaginal orgasm.[4] In *Feminine Psychology*, Horney states:

> Like all sciences and valuations, the psychology of women has hitherto been considered only from the point of view of men. It is inevitable that the man's position of advantage should cause objective validity to be attributed to his subjective, affective relations to women ... the question then is how far analytical psychology also, when its researches have women for their object, is under the spell of this way of thinking (56).

It is almost universal among the feminists that they have been very dissatisfied with the psychoanalysis and psychiatry which are exclusively representing male-defined values and standards. Phyllis Chesler, in an article "Patient and Patriarch: Women in the Psychotherapeutic Relationship," complains about the power-oriented, paternalistic and oppressive nature of the Freudian and post-Freudian psychoanalytic techniques which merely work to devalue women and socialize them to devalue themselves. She maintains that the hysteria or neurosis of women have been viewed by the therapists as "underhanded domestic tyrannies manufactured by spiteful, self-pitying, and generally unpleasant women whose inability to be happy as women probably stems from unresolved penis envy, and unresolved Electra (or female

Oedipal) complex, or from general, intractable female stubbornness" (264). Chesler believes that the Freudian tradition has not only appropriated the cause of women's insanity to anatomical inevitability, but also endowed the illness with a label addressing the caricature of femininity, which in particular emphasizes women's vulnerability to distress and their emotional instability.

While the language and ideology of orthodox psychology are to many feminist psychiatrists and psychologists inapplicable and invalid to understand the subject of woman and madness, they attempt to subvert the orthodoxy by endowing the subject with new interpretations. Jean Baker Miller, in *Psychoanalysis and Women,* suggests a reform of psychotherapeutic methods:

> The belief that women could or should accept and adjust to the stereotyped role has been a cause, not the cure, of their problems. From this new perspective, they then suggest many exciting reorientations for therapy. One permits all so-called symptoms to be seen in a new light – no longer merely as defenses, maneuvers, or other such tactics, but as struggles to preserve or express some deeply needed aspects of personal integrity in a milieu that will not allow for their direct expression. The task of a therapist then becomes the cooperative search for an understanding of those needs and an understanding of how they have been diverted or distorted (281).

The view of Miller is echoed by many feminists. They reject Freud's assumption that women's mental illness is an anatomical inevitability, and instead see it as a cultural phenomenon which should be understood in terms of sexual politics. They argue that in most cases female insanity can be interpreted as a result of the traumatism women suffer in a society which is power-structured and male-dominated. According to Kate Millett in *Sexual Politics*,

> When in any group of persons, the ego is subjected to such invidious versions of itself through social beliefs, ideology, and tradition, the effect is bound to be pernicious. This coupled with the persistent though frequently subtle denigration women encounter daily through personal contacts, the impressions gathered from the image and media about them, and the discrimination in matters of behavior, employment, and education which they endure, should make it no very special cause for surprise that women develop group characteristic common to those who suffer minority status and a marginal existence (31).

Chesler also defines madness as a result of social oppression. In *Woman and Madness*, she criticizes in a particularly strong tone the vice of patriarchal culture in causing woman's madness:

> Women are impaled on the cross of self-sacrifice. Unlike men, they are categorically denied the experience of cultural supremacy, humanity, and renewal based on their sexual identity – and on the blood sacrifice, in some way, of a member of the opposite sex. In different ways, some women are driven mad by this fact. Their madness is treated in such a way as to turn it into another form of self-sacrifice. Such madness is essentially an intense experience of female biological, sexual, and cultural castration, and a doomed search for potency (71).

Many feminists and psychologists look at the issue of female madness as largely related to social prejudice and oppression, and they reinterpret the significance of madness in different ways. L.D. Laing, though himself not essentially a feminist, has provided a revolutionary terminology and framework in terms of both philosophy and psychoanalysis for the feminist reorientation of female malady. Laing believes that

psychosis, whether in women or in men, is an understandable or even a "sane" response to life in a destructive society. Schizophrenia, Laing says, "is a special strategy that a person invents in order to live in an unlivable situation" (79). Nevertheless, he does not see madness as the ultimate answer to social and political oppression. Rather, he regards madness or schizophrenia as the medium through which the person, by having recognized the general illness of society and its subjective implications, is able to achieve "superior sanity." At first glance, Laing's assumption is not very different from the classical definition of madness as they both emphasize the relationship between madness and one's enlightenment. However, his theory is dissimilar from the classical one in the sense that it has taken a large step forward by accommodating the celebration of "superior sanity" to both women and men.

The identification between madness and empowerment, as exemplified by L.D. Laing's theory, is a common conception among feminists. The French feminists are among those who emphasize the relationship between madness and female empowerment most strongly, in which they interpret madness as the historical label representing female protest and revolution.[5] Similarly, although Chesler does not go as far as the French feminists to celebrate exclusively the power of female madness, she has gone beyond the vision of madwoman as a passive victim. In *Woman and Madness*, she maintains that women confined to mental institutions are failed but active and heroic rebels who revolt against the narrowly defined femininity, taken up "a doomed search for potency" (71), whose insanity are "both an expression of female powerlessness and an unsuccessful attempt to reject and overcome this state" and also the "penalties for being 'female,' as well as desiring or daring not to be" (55-56). Although Chesler regards female insanity as an expression of women's "powerlessness" and "failure" to transcend their assigned role, it is also representing

the heroines' "desire" and "dare" to rebel.

Elaine Showalter, however, maintains that madness can just be the opposite of empowerment. She states:

> It is certainly possible to see hysteria within the specific historical framework of the nineteenth century as an unconscious form of feminist protest, the counterpart of the attack on patriarchal values carried out by the women's movement of the time. ... Such claims, however, come dangerously close to romanticizing and endorsing madness as a desirable form of rebellion rather than seeing it as the desperate communication of the powerless. For madness, as Shoshana Felman has noted, is "quite the opposite of rebellion. Madness is the impasse confronting those whom cultural conditioning has deprived of the very means of protest and self-affirmation."[6] A serious historical study of the female malady should not romanticize madness as one of women's wrongs any more than it should accept an essentialist equation between femininity and insanity (5).

If the French feminists have exclusively looked at madness as a source of female empowerment, Showalter has adopted an opposite view by regarding it as a form female confinement. Chesler lies in the middle course by locating female madness somewhere between confinement and empowerment,

Feminist interest in female insanity does not lie only in the works of psychologists, psychiatrists, philosophers or theorists. It is also a major thematic concern of the literary writers, particularly among those women writers who aim to record and represent women's internal experience by giving female malady a new picture. Since the early era of the Western women's movement, the significance of female madness has been theorized in literature. In 1797, Mary Wollstonecraft, one

of the earliest feminist theorists, worked on a novel namely *Maria; or, The Wrongs of Woman* as a companion piece to her political treatise *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman.*[7] The novel describes "the misery and oppression, peculiar to women, that arise out of the partial laws and customs of society" (21). The heroine, Maria, has been forced into a madhouse by her abusive husband, who enjoys sexual adventures by controlling her fortune and liberty. In the novel, female insanity is portrayed as the symbol of women's misery and oppression resulted from the biased laws and customs of society. Its heroine, Maria, is the earliest literary heroine whose madness symbolizes victimized womanhood in an oppressive cultural environment. After Mary Wollstonecraft, the number of women writers who devote themselves to explore the theme of woman and madness increases continuously. Since the 19th century, more attempts have been made to reinterpret women's derangement. While Wollstonecraft still portrays her mad Maria as the victim of patriarchal brutality, many writers have gone beyond this vision and endow the "illness" with rationalized and powerful parameter.

Gilbert and Gubar, in their prominent work *The Madwoman in the Attic* (1979), celebrate the figure of madwoman, whose demonism subverts the patriarchal myth of "the Angel in the House" – the madwoman is indeed "the Angel of Destruction" (478). They argue that "patriarchal socialization literally makes women sick, both physically and mentally"(53). From the patriarchal point of view, a woman who rejects the submissive silences of domesticity is seen as a terrible object associated with insanity. However, from a feminist point of view, the "monstrous" woman is simply the one seeking the power of self-articulation. While portraying the difficulty and obstacles female writers encounter when they struggle to occupy a place in the male-dominated literary canon, Gibert and Gubar suggest that the attempt of a writer to create fiercely

independent characters or mad and monstrous women who seek to destroy all the patriarchal strictures is actually a reflection of the writer's desire to project her rebellious impulses against the antagonistic literary environment which inhibits her writing career. The madwoman in women's literature could thus be regarded as the author's double, an image of her own anxiety and rage. Defining themselves as prisoners of their own gender, many women writers project their feeling of social confinement and their yearning for spiritual escape through their creation of the insane female characters. Female madness is not treated solely as the result of victimization, but also the agent for a woman to avenge herself against the source of oppression. Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1847), Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* (1847), George Eliot's *Daniel Deronda* (1867) and the works of other writers like Jane Austen, Mary Shelley and Emily Dickinson are exceptionally memorable in the sense that they have granted the subject of woman and madness innovative interpretations, particularly in terms of their portrayal of madness in relation to female confinement and empowerment.

Although there are numerous female pioneers who have taken up the challenge to break the male monopoly on the representation of literary madness, it is not until the emergence of the 20th century that works on madness written by women begin to flourish both in quality and quantity. Virginia Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway* (1925), Sylvia Plath's *The Bell Jar* (1963), Jean Rhys' *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966), Doris Lessing's "To Room Nineteen" (1963) and *The Four-Gated City* (1969), Margaret Atwood's *Surfacing* (1972), Charlotte Perkin Gilman's "The Yellow Wallpaper" (1973), are all representatives of women's writings on the theme of woman and madness.[8] Although these writers do not all come from the same place, the common literary interest among them have transcended time and place and brought them together for

scholarly analysis. All of the above-mentioned works emphasize the gender-related aspects of mental illness and address patriarchal oppression as the primary culprit in the etiology of female mental disorders. They depict female disaster in terms of their encounter with the male authority figure, whether lover, husband, father or psychiatrist, who decides the question of sanity and assumes the power to incarcerate and to destroy the woman's individuality.[9] As depicted by these writers, madness is not only the result of male oppression but also the source of female rebellious empowerment. The "madness" of the protagonists can be used as a strategy to resist the suppressive patriarchal power exerted on them. By entering the world of insanity, the female protagonists are on the one hand able to escape from the social norms and expectations which are generally regarded as "sane," while on the other "transcend" the "sanity" of the human world which is predominantly male-oriented. By accusing the patriarchal world which offers no place to accommodate women's subjectivity so that they are pushed peripherally to the world of "madness," the writers reveal the kind of "collusive madness" manifested by the patriarchal world in the form of sexual oppression. These women writers in the 20th century, together with many others, have participated in the recreation the world of madness by deconstructing the traditional stereotyping of women. This burgeoning body of literature, as stated by Marilyn Yalom in *Maternity, Mortality, and the Literature of Madness*, "provides an opportunity for today's theoreticians to explore pathology from the perspective of the 'other half'; it offers a fresh avenue of approach into the underworld of mental disorder and a vista on basic anxieties that may be common to all Western women"(2).

In any case, madness, classical or modern, as empowerment or confinement, has long been associated with feminine nature or female sexuality. This cultural association of woman and madness in the West has become emblematic in Western

women's writings, in which the female writers have detached themselves from the male-dominated literary canon and created a new channel for their own voice. Female madness, as the symbol of both victimized and rebellious womanhood, becomes a strategic concern in Western women's writings. To write about mental derangement means to communicate the uncommunicable. Kitty Fitzgerald and Elsa Lewin, though not as well known as their forerunners, have taken up the challenge and speak out the hidden torments of the women whose voice has always been ignored in literary history.

This thesis draws a cross-cultural comparison between Western and Chinese women's writing on the subject of woman and madness. Since the essentialist association between madness and femininity and the use of madness as resistance as well as a textual strategy against patriarchal culture are originally Western construction, it is not until the emergence of May-Fourth Movement at the beginning of 20th century that female madness begins to be treated as a phenomenon that can be associated with female confinement and as well as empowerment in China. Moreover, it is only in this era that women writers begin to be conscious of this subject and put it into their writings.

The concept of madness in Chinese is conveyed in words such as "feng" 瘋, "dian" 癲, "kuang" 狂, "juan" 狷, "qi" 痴, all of which, in the classical Chinese context, are socially, politically, and philosophically symbolic. Confucianism, being the political ideology of ancient China, tends to celebrate rationality and emphasize its importance to political rule. In *Lun Yu* 論語 [The analects of Confucius], there is an anecdote about Confucius 孔子 and Jie Yu 接輿, a recluse from Chu 楚 who feigns madness and mockingly advises Confucius to withdraw a safe distance from politics.[10]

This anecdote, which reveals personal choice of detachment during political crisis, is a dramatic fragment of the Chinese intellectual tradition. The fact that Jie Yu "feigns madness" while advising Confucius to withdraw from politics suggests that madness could be used tactically. It is a form of "tactical madness" which is feigned by sages and talented officials "in order to escape the hate and envy of their contemporaries, the despotism of princes, and the follies committed by those in power."[11] Over the centuries, madmen like Jie Yu reappear sometimes in the guise of a hermit, fisherman, rustics or an eccentric scholar-official retired in the wood.[12] While "rationality" is usually associated with "ru shi"入世 [engagement in the world], "madness" symbolizes a "chu shi" 出世 attitude [detachment the world]. "The madman of Jie Yu" has become a recurrent theme in Chinese literature, suggesting "not merely eccentricity, but also individualism and estrangement, autonomous artistic vision, and social-political protest; perhaps even defection" (Schneider: 80-81).

Apart from the tactical madness which emphasizes passive protest and detachment, madness can also be referred to as the "mad ardour," which, according to Scheneider, can best characterize Qu Yuan 屈原, the prominent Chinese ancient official and poet who refuses to withdraw voluntarily from public action or temper his passionate zeal. To Qu Yuan, this is a mad ardour to realize ideals and implement absolute values. It differs basically from tactical madness, which is a pose of eccentricity and a convention of passive protest (Schneider: 14-15). In other words, while tactical madness suggests individualism and socio-political detachment, mad ardour denotes an intense and excessive emotion resulted from one's refusal to comply with his political failure, in which the madman is believed to be embodying higher values and vision. This connotation of madness, to some extent, does not differ much from the Western classical interpretation of the male madness.

Throughout the tradition of Chinese literature, the theme of madness has been associated with positive connotations. The Chinese women, who have been alienated from the male-dominated culture, are given little share in it. Although the figure of madwoman is hardly present in classical Chinese literature, the morbidity of women is still explored in various aberrant forms. For instance, the mysterious and haunting images of women is represented through the portrayal of the ghost women and female spirit in *Liao zhai zhi yi* 聊齋誌異 [Strange stories of liao zhai], while female sexual perversion is negatively narrated in *Jin ping mei* 金瓶梅 [The golden lotus]. None of the portrayals has ever connected women to the positive connotation of madness in the classical sense. Even if women are represented positively, they are merely the heroines used as a discursive sign being produced by men to promulgate Confucian ethics such as loyalty and filial piety.

It is only in modern literature, particularly in women's literature that the theme of madness and its intricate relationship with woman has become a significant issue, conveying the author's feministic concern with victimized and rebellious womanhood. Although the theme of madness in Chinese modern literature represents a particular feminist concern, it is not exclusively addressed by feminist conception. In the early 20th century, for instance, one of the May-Fourth great writers Lu Xun 魯迅, has written on the topic of madness. In his *Kuangren riji* 狂人日記 [Diary of a madman] (1918), the narrator is a madman whose tortured imagination makes him discover that the society he is living in is organized around the promotion and practice of cannibalism. In a series of revelations, he even finds that the words "eat people" endlessly repeat between the lines of classical texts. With his heightened sensitivity to the evils lurking between the lines of classical texts, the madman actually symbolizes Lu Xun's critical consciousness of the menace of Confucianism in

depreciating one's personality, to which he refers as "cannibalistic ethical code" 吃人的禮教 [chi ren de nijiao]. This kind of madness which involves a person's revelatory inspiration and unconventional thoughts is not gender-related and is somehow close to the Chinese as well as Western ancient classical definition of madness. "Zhuhu" 祝福 [The new year's sacrifice] (1920) is Lu Xun's other short story about madness. In this story, the mad person is no longer the perceptive revelator but a peasant women, Xianglin Sao 祥林嫂 who descends into poverty and insanity after she is ruined by a series of oppression and exploitation exerted by the menacing structures of the traditional social order. Xianglin Sao's madness, which is a result of brutal social oppression, somehow addresses the writer's concern about women's maltreatment in the society. However, it cannot be qualified as the writer's whole-hearted feminist concern. The story is told by a male narrator whose tone is cold and rational throughout the narrative. His emotional detachment implies that the frustration of feminine emotionality as expressed in Xianglin Sao's madness "is skillfully contained within a controlling frame of masculine rationality" (Lieberman 198). Furthermore, the story tends to idealize maternal love in order to draw sympathy for its female protagonist who is driven mad by the tragic loss of her son. On the one hand, this emphasis on the bereavement of the mother for her lost son as being the main cause of her madness, is still largely reminiscent of the traditional stereotype of woman – "the virtuous wife and good mother" 賢妻良母 [xianqi liangmu], who has an innate capacity to make sacrifices for her offspring. On the other, the focus on Xianglin Sao's sympathetic depreciation suggest that the madness only denotes her victimization but provides no way out for her empowerment or rebellion. The writer has not endowed his victimized character with any power to reverse her damned situation. Xianglin Sao is the object to be saved, but not a

subject who can save herself. Above all, the madness of Xianglin Sao is only a collective illness symbolizing the writer's awareness of the class oppression, cultural bankruptcy, and national powerlessness of his time. Xianglin Sao should be saved, but her redemption is largely conditioned by the saving of the whole nation. The feminist concern, which is supposed to exist in the story, is overwhelmed by the nationalistic concern. Lu Xun has expressed his serious awareness of women's oppression in Chinese society, but he is more concerned about the nation's status rather than the women's status.

Although madness as a thematic concern exists in both classical as well as modern Chinese literature, its genuine association with gender issue, especially with which does not merely address victimized but also rebellious womanhood, appears only with the emergence of feminist writers, particularly female feminist writers in China. While feminist movement emerged in the West as early as the late 18th century, it did not appear in China until the 20th century.

In Chinese society, the authoritativeness and superiority of men and submissiveness and inferiority of women are firmly defined. In the Chinese classic *Liji* 禮記 [The book of rites], it states that "fu nu, cong ren zhe ye" 婦女,從人者也 [Woman is the follower]. In Ban Zhao's 班昭 *Nujie* 女誡 [The women's commandment], it states that "fu zhe, tian ye" 夫者, 天也 [Man is the heaven]. The traditional Chinese definition of gender hierarchy is based on the submission of women to men. This patriarchal tradition, though in name claims to protect women "under the heaven of the men," has actually secured the authority of men to control and exploit women.

It was not until the commencement of the May Fourth Movement in China in the 20th century that this Confucian conception was challenged. Nevertheless, in the

Republic, women's liberation was determined by the existing political ideologies and realities. Although women's equality in society was enforced by constitution,[13] in practice, however, the problems of women in majority were still largely neglected. Women's movements before the May-Fourth era (1919-1942) were only the activity of a few well-educated and upper class women. The upcoming of the May Fourth New Culture Movement, as it was later called, "created a wave of feminist agitation and women's activism in China's urban areas" (Wang 3). It has long been argued that the Chinese feminist movement during the era of May-Fourth emerged only as the result of "the inclusion of women in men's pursuit of a 'Chinese Enlightenment'" (Wang 13), in which women's status was closely linked with the nation's status and that women's emancipation meant the nation's modernization.[14] Nevertheless, it could not be denied that the movement had actually constructed a ground for the development of women's movement as well as feminism in China. Thence, we see the emergence of a pool of women writers in the Chinese literary scene. However, while the post-Austen nineteenth century is regarded by recent Western feminist critics such as Ellen Moer, Elaine Showalter, Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar as the greatest period of female progress in literature, the vigor and achievement of modern Chinese women writers are not fully recognized until the 1980s.[15]

Chinese women have for centuries been, both physically and mentally, the oppressed sex which suffers inequality with men in varying degrees, regardless of changes in political system. In traditional Chinese fiction and drama, women are most of the time depicted as the weaker and inferior sex (Leung 136). The majority are obedient, gentle, and subservient figures modelled after the norms of Chinese patriarchal society, though there are always some exceptions, particularly since the late imperial period.[16] It was not until the May Fourth period that awakened women

writers such as Ding Ling 丁玲, called for the liberation of women through their fiction.[17] But from the early thirties, "such calls were fused with and blurred by the notion of class struggle in revolutionary literature" (Leung 136). Although the number of women writers continued to increase during the Maoist era (1949-1976) in the People's Republic,[18] many works being produced were guided by the norms of Socialist Realism. Since the political policy of social construction needed women's participation as the work force, they were acclaimed as "holding up half of the sky." Images of the oppressed female were rapidly replaced by the heroic female revolutionaries in fiction, promoting an impression that women had achieved equal status as men. Entering the Post-Mao era, however, "this [optimistic] impression created by propagandist literature has been shattered" (Leung 136). Once again, we see, particularly in women's writings, that the inequalities between the two sexes still firmly exist. Various rights being constitutionally granted to women are not actually attained in reality. During the 1980s and 90s, while the position of women in contemporary Chinese society has once again become an important subject for Western scholarship, most of the research being conducted shows that socialism and patriarchy exist in stable harmony in the People's Republic. Women's lives are still largely determined by their relationships to the male. "Gender equality and women's liberation are still not major items on the agenda of China's policy planners or for women themselves."[19] "In the early 1980's women believe – with surprising tenacity – in their biological inferiority."[20] What differs is that "after the three decades of 'ultra-left' rule," women writers, as well as the women characters they create, "have to rid themselves of the shadow of political dogmatism" (Leung 136).[21]

The post-Mao women writers contribute largely to bringing back the long-suppressed issues of the female sex to the forefront.[22] These writers, particularly

those newly-emerged young women writers who grow up under the Red Flag and have suffered through the turmoil of the Cultural Revolution and the rustication movement, have formulated unconventional perceptions about women's lives and their relation to culture and society. According to Leung Lai-fong:

> They call for the return of feminine dignity which has been distorted by puritanism and political dogmatism, for a re-emphasis on the individual which had been eclipsed by collective ideals, and for the realization of the potential and talent of the female self which had been overwhelmed by the male sex. They have created a gallery of female images which powerfully project the anguish and frustration, suffering and accusation, love and ideals of women in contemporary China (136).

The twentieth century is an age we see the emergence and development of Chinese women's literature, particularly since the post-Mao period. Writing itself becomes an emancipatory exercise which permits the writers to refuse, revise and reassert – refusing the patriarchal stereotyping of women, revising the representation of femininity, and reasserting women's identity, autonomy and individuality.

Although the concern with female neuroses in patriarchal society is primarily an important theme in Western women's literature, the concept, particularly that of the relationship between female madness and confinement or empowerment, speaks to the Chinese women writers as well. Echoing their Western counterparts, those Chinese women writers who write about woman and madness have not only narrated a situation of extreme sexist politics, but also represented an anti-traditional situation in which female insanity becomes the evidence of patriarchal oppression as well as the source of empowerment for victimized women to rebel against their oppressors.

Despite vast historical, geographical and personal differences, Chinese women

writers have developed a kind of kinship with Western women writers through the adaptation of their theories and works. In China, the May-Fourth Movement pivoted the importation of Western ideas into the Chinese intelligentsia. Since the movement was largely informed by the Western ideology, it is no surprise that translations of Western feminist texts and discussions of Western women's movement constituted a large part of the Chinese feminist agitation during that time. One of the most influential Western works being translated into Chinese is Ibsen's play *A Doll's House*, which is given the title *Nuola* 娜拉 [Nora]. Ibsen's reproach of the patriarchal family becomes a valuable example for the critique of the traditional Chinese family. Nora, the protagonist of the play who courageously rebels against her oppressive family and strives to be an independent human being, is regarded as the number one Western role model for Chinese women. After that, not only have more and more Western classics been translated into Chinese, but the attention among the Chinese writers, including the women writers, have also been drawn to the Western writers and their works. Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1847), a book about female madness and patriarchal oppression, was a schoolgirl's classic in Victorian England and is today a modern classic in China. It was translated into Chinese in 1928 and is regarded as one of the most influential feminist works ever published in China. It is even the very first material from which Chinese women writers form their impression of Western women's literature. Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* (1847) is another work about female insanity that arouses so much public and critical interest since the first edition of its translation was published in the 1950s. The translator Liang Shiqiu 梁實秋, himself a famous modern Chinese writer and critic, remarks in the translator's

note of *Wuthering Heights*, "I was so much overwhelmed by Emily Brontë's vision in *Wuthering Heights*, which transcends the boundary of time, space, and gender that I decided to translate the novel in 1939" (1). When asked about their impression of Western women's literature, the Chinese women writers always mention the Brontës. For instance, Zhang Ailing 張愛玲 [Eileen Chang], the leading figure in the Chinese female literary canon,[23] shows great familiarity with them. Shui Jin 水晶, one of the most famous critics of Zhang's works, states that "Zhang admires the Brontës ... She even described her own features by saying 'my eyes, clear and shining, full of trembling soul, are like those of Charlotte and Emily Brontës, authors of *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights*" (39). Cong Su 叢甦, a Chinese woman writer born in 1937 and has written a number of quality works like *Dian fu riji* 顛婦日記 [The diary of a mad woman] (1977), *Zhong guo ren* 中國人 [The Chinese people] (1978), *Xiang fei* 想飛 [Want to fly] (1977), Shuo yu mo 獸與魔 [Beast and devil] (1987), also expresses her indebtedness to the Western literary model. She admits: "As far as Western literature is concerned, I won't limit myself to women writers, but Emily Brontës, for instance, was on my reading list – I was pretty much concentrated on eighteenth- and nineteenth-century English and American novels when I was in college" (Cong 23). Li Ang, one of the writers this thesis deals with, also implicitly acknowledges her literary indebtedness to Victorian women writers. In an interview with Lin Yijie 林依潔 which is included in her work *Tamen de yanlei* 她們的眼淚 [Their tears], she states, "when I was in the eighth grade, I started to read the famous Western novels for leisure – *Jane Eyre*, *Wuthering Heights*, *Middlemarch*, *Madam Bovary* ..."(207). Influenced by the Western celebration of female madness, Chinese

scholarship also tends to regard madness as a possible means of transcending the limits of womanhood and, at its best, subverting the patriarchal social order (Wang 236), in which the "virtuous wife and good mother" 賢妻良母 [xian qi liang mu] or "the timid woman" 弱質女流 [ruo zi nu liu] can be transformed into the demonic avengers.

While the Brontës are generally regarded as pioneers in Western women's literary canon who write about woman and madness, Zhang Ailing 張愛玲 [Eileen Chang], who emerges in the middle of 20th century, is among Chinese women writers the very first and best one who has written on this topic (Zhou 285). Her works, such as "Jin suo ji" 金鎖記 [The golden cangue] (1943), "Chen xiang xie: Di er lu xiang" 沉香屑: 第二爐香 (1943), *Yuan nu* 怨女 (1947), "Xiao Ai" 小艾 (1950), are all about madness in relation to female victimization and rebellion. In these stories, the mad protagonists such as Qiqiao 七巧, Yinti 銀娣, Mi qiu er taitai 蜜秋兒太太 and Yifei liaojiu 憶妃老九 all embody astonishingly destructive power. Their madness, as portrayed by Zhang, constitutes a vicious cycle – victimization leads to their destructive rebellion, which results in their further confinement. "The Golden Cangue," in particular, is regarded as transitional and therefore of pivotal importance because its plots, theme, and image forecast crucial later development in the distinctively female literary tradition in modern China.

Xiao Hong 蕭紅 is another female writer who has written about woman and madness. She is a May-Fourth writer active in the 1920s-40s and is celebrated for her representations of women of the laboring classes who are brutalized by poverty, ignorance, economic exploitation, war, social and familial tyranny. Although she is generally regarded as the protegé of Lu Xun and that her narrative is overwhelmed by

the national discourse, her style of writing and her conception about women in some ways differentiate from Lu Xun. Her works like *Shengsi chang* 生死場 [The field of life and death] (1935) and *Hulan he Zhun* 呼蘭河傳 [Tales of hulan river] (1941), show her interest in the madness of the bereaved mother. Unlike Lu Xun or Hu Shi 胡適 who tends to idealize motherhood, Xiao Hong endows it with an impassioned power to struggle for survival. In her stories, the madness of the mother is no longer merely badges of victimization, it also involves her strike to survive amidst misogynistic violence. Although child loss is one source of her pain, unlike those mothers in Lu Xun's or Hu Shi's stories, it is only one among many physical and emotional hardships she suffers. Under the portrayal of Xiao Hong, "women can be compassionately represented as acting upon their own desires" (Lieberman 217). Though they might be driven mad by disastrous oppression of society, their madness still allows them the survival power to struggle onwards.

A lot of modern Chinese women writers have consciously borrowed from Western literary models for their writings in order to transcend the limits of Chinese tradition. Many of them may have grown up with the images of the rebellious Jane in their hearts. This indicates an implicit kinship between modern Chinese and Western women writers even though they are geographically and culturally so distant from one another. This relationship formulates one of the grounds for our cross-cultural comparison between the Western and the Chinese women writers. Gilbert and Gubar in *The Madwoman in the Attic* uses Bertha from *Jane Eyre* as the pivotal figure in re-visioning a literary tradition which manifests "the common, female impulse to struggle free from social and literary confinement through strategic re-definitions of self, art and society" (xi), David Dewei Wang, meanwhile, regards the plot of the madwoman in Chinese women literature as a "tale of a woman's quest of self definition" which

involves "coming to terms with her own fragmentation" and "making herself whole" (228). Li Ang and Tie Ning are two of the writers who have appropriated madness into their own parameters and endowed it with a special strength which becomes a source of revengeful power for their female protagonists to protest and to rebel.

Above all, in both Western and Chinese modern literature, particularly in women's writings, madness is no longer treated as a classical celebrated quality which denotes a sort of social-political ostracism. Under the portrayals of both the Western and Chinese women writers, madness is interpreted as a psychological problem, a mental derangement resulting form patriarchal oppression and exploitation. What is more, madness is not exclusively seen as the result of victimization, but also a source of female rebellion and destruction, though the writers also address the limitation of female empowerment and liberation through madness and murder.

Chapter Three

Madwoman as the Murderous Daughter: Kitty Fitzgerald's *Marge* and Tie Ning's *The Cliff in the Afternoon*

This Chapter will explore gender conflict chiefly in terms of the confrontation between father and daughter and the intricate relationship between mother and daughter as represented in Kitty Fitzgerald's *Marge* and Tie Ning's *Wu hou xuanya* 午後懸崖 [The cliff in the afternoon], in an attempt to expound on the psychological drama of the murderous daughter. Through examining the life of the Western and Chinese daughters who have grown up from their frustrated and unhappy youth into their mad or malevolent age, this chapter aims at comparing and contrasting how the predestined and inevitable victimization of women in both Western and Chinese patriarchal family structure has triggered off the extremity of female anger which is ultimately transformed into a form of destructive power. Since the daughters are born with a predestined fate of victimization as their natural kinship with their fathers can never be reversed, they try to terminate the relationship in a destructive way by enacting a murder, through which they can be both physically and spiritually detached from the haunting father figures.

In both stories, the father-daughter conflict demonstrates how menacing patriarchy as embodied in the father figure characterizes both English and Chinese cultures in destructive ways. The tyrannical power of the father, according to Janet Sayers, "spoke to the centrality – in male-dominated society – of the father as first representative in the child's mind of power, sexual repression, and knowledge ..." (8). The murderous wish of the daughter, accordingly, is largely attributed to the haunt of the tyrannical father figure. Moreover, both stories compose a serious criticism of the

hypocrisy and exploitative nature of society. In *Marge*, the target of criticism is mainly the social institution of psychotherapy. In *The Cliff in the Afternoon*, the writer contrives a particular historical and political criticism. Situating the timeframe of the story within the period around the Cultural Revolution to the present time, the writer has not only implicitly exposed the viciousness of the Cultural Revolution in eroding and distorting humanity and morality, but also uncovered the fact that the empowerment women suppose to have gained since the May-Fourth Movement is only a disguise of political strategy. Women are still largely confined within a form of patriarchal order and their status is largely vulnerable to political appropriation. Apart from the similarities they bear, *Marge* and *The Cliff in the Afternoon* differ from each other in certain aspects. First of all, the mother-daughter relationship is represented both similarly and differently in the two stories. Kitty Fitzgerald and Tie Ning echo each other in terms of their emphasis on the powerfully charged relationship between mother and daughter. Nevertheless, while in *Marge* the relationship between the protagonist Marge and her mother constitutes a mutual love bonding, the relationship between the main character Han Guixin 韓桂心 and her mother Zhang Meifang 張美芳 in *The Cliff in the Afternoon* suggests a cyclical relationship between the manipulator and the manipulated, as there exists a sense of rivalry between them. Moreover, although the "murder" executed by the Western and Chinese daughters both take up a collective and ritual characteristic of persecuting the haunting father who symbolizes patriarchal menace, the motivation of the Chinese daughter is more complicated in the sense that her murderous wish is not merely formulated by her deep-rooted hatred against men in general, but also by an obsessive jealousy originated from her insatiable materialistic greed and strong desire "to become somebody" 出人頭地 (24). Also, while both stories portray female

madness as a result of patriarchal oppression and the manslaughter being enacted represent the attempt of revenge and rebellion, the two writers perceive the validity of female madness and murder differently. In *Marge*, madness and murder remain metaphors for transgression and empowerment against patriarchy, in which the story terminates immediately after the murder is performed, symbolizing the ultimate explosion of the heroine's female power. *The Cliff in the Afternoon*, however, addresses the limitations of empowerment through madness and the negativity of avenging patriarchy through murder. Tie Ning has taken a large step further to portray the aftermath of the murder, in which the murderer is driven into further imprisonment. In the story, female imprisonment and rebellion constitute a vicious cycle – while female rebellion is incited by patriarchal imprisonment, the result of the rebellion is a further confinement by patriarchy. Apparently, the Chinese writer does not see the murder of patriarchs as workable and she has melancholically hinted at the impossibility of the murderer's salvation.

Kitty Fitzgerald's *Marge*

Marge is a novel set in a cross-generic combination of styles – mainly psychic thriller blended with myths, stream of consciousness and diaries. By portraying a woman who has suffered disastrous childhood under the intimidation and abuse of her father and is put into further exploitation when she enters society, the novel exposes the tyrannous nature of fatherhood and the insensitivity and cruelty of society as represented by the social institution of psychotherapy. The madness of the protagonist is at first a result of her victimization but is later transformed into a source of demonic power with which she carries out a ritual murder. With the murder being an act of novelistic closure which leaves the reader vicariously condoning a violent

revenge fantasy, the writer has not only expressed her intention in "urging the reader consider murder as a social illness, an inevitability, and potentially the extreme reciprocation of every woman's oppression" (Munt 155), but also attempts to mystify women's madness as a form of empowerment which is capable of outfighting patriarchal oppression.

The protagonist of the story is Marge, whose mental illness is depicted as a result of her father's brutal abuse during her childhood. Since her childhood, Marge, together with her mother, has been living in a confined environment, suffering tortures and sexual abuse. As a daughter, Marge's relationship with her father is disastrous, with her father being the victimizer and herself the sufferer. Her relationship with her mother, by contrast, is based on intimacy and affection. Although they both lead unbearable life under the tyranny of the father, they have endured it through mutual love and support. However, after her mother had been murdered by her own father, Marge loses the feeling of being loved and cared about forever. When she later finds out that she is pregnant after being frequently raped by her own father, she collapses with a mental breakdown. Thereafter, Marge is temporarily relieved from the tyrannous control of her father. However, the image of the father comes back again and again to haunt her existence. After she has been taken into the medical institution, she is further victimized by the psychiatric or psychological treatment, which, as represented in the story, only works to control the patients rather than truly curing them. Recklessly, she is even assigned a ruthless male social worker who is sexually stimulated by her past and who believes in the superiority of the social worker to his clients. To Marge, he becomes a surrogate father symbolizing another pursuing figure. Being unable to gain any genuine help from society, Marge suffers a further mental collapse. She begins to have delusions; she is suddenly addressed by

the female goddesses of Gaealand who wish to "destroy Cronus" in his intention to father a new son. Later, Marge experiences a split personality. While a part of her self still remains conformable to social expectation, her other self, the demonic and rebellious part, has secretly worked out a plan of revenge. Believing herself to be "informed" by the Goddesses, Marge decides to take on a ritual task – to relinquish the source of oppression through a murder. Instead of killing her wrongdoers directly, Marge's hatred and rage have taken on a collective and ritual quality as she has ultimately killed "someone" for the sake of "someone else" who in reality are not directly related to her life. The "someone else" is Maggie and the "someone" is Maggie's lover, Joe. Since Marge has been detached from her mother, she projects her love and care on Maggie, a woman living across the street of her apartment and is concurrently being exploited by a loutish boyfriend, Joe, who manipulates and abuses her loneliness. At the end of the story, Marge murders Joe, in an act to terminate his abuse on Maggie, and in a symbolic sense, avenges her own father and all patriarchal violence for the plight of herself, for her mother, and for the women being oppressed in general.

Fatherhood, as portrayed in *Marge*, is essentially the incarnation of patriarchal evil. Chesler, in *Women and Madness*, remarks that "prostitution, rape, incest, and sexual molestation of female children by adult males are so common ..." (165) and that "the man predicates his sexual desire on the female's (his daughter's) innocence, helplessness, youthfulness, and monogamous idolatry"(59). Germaine Greer, in *The Whole Woman*, also states, "as the fabric of patriarchal society has cracked under the strain of women's insurrection every kind of putrid matter has burst out of it, none of it more bewildering and appalling that the facts about sexual abuse of children" (227). At the very beginning of the novel, we have already been introduced to the menace of

fatherhood as exemplified in Marge's father: "My father always taught me to be prepared. I've always been prepared" (1). Here, "being prepared" means being incestuously abused. Marge's father is evil, possessive, suspicious and sexually dominant. He is both a tyrannous father and husband. As a husband, he never treats his wife as a human being who is deserved to be respected. He is so jealous and suspicious that he spies on every bit of her life. As Marge mentions, "my dad used to talk about the 'watchers' and the 'watched'" (2). To him, his wife is only an object to be watched, controlled and abused. For instance, he does not allow his wife to keep a mirror – "I haven't got a mirror in the flat – dad never allowed them ..." (6). As Teresa Brennan has pointed out, one needs to perceive oneself in a mirror as a whole, or the self becomes merely a "disconnected bundle of parts" (70). With her mirror being smashed by her husband, the self-identity of Marge's mother is destroyed and she is completely dehumanized. Her prolonged spiritual turmoil and physical maltreatment is put to an end only after she is imposed on a final destruction – she is killed by this ghastly man. In a word, the marriage of Marge's mother to this man signals her entrance into a world of male pathological authority which is terminated only with her tragic death. Nevertheless, the menacing patriarchal power does not cease after the death of the woman. With the permanent disappearance of his wife, Marge's father turns to abuse his own daughter. His beastiality is fully expressed in his sadistic taste about Marge's virginal frigidity. For him, sexuality is interwoven with the desire to control and dominate. His sexual domination over Marge's body has not only proved that he is a father-pander who regards his daughter as a sexual instrument for the satisfaction of his animalistic sexual desire, it also reflects his menacing desire to reassert the power and control he has lost on his wife. Marge's life is drastically consumed in an unwilling participation in the incestuous relationship

with her father. Throughout her childhood, Marge has been confined in an isolated environment. "All night long I sat on the damp floor staring up at the bricked up square that had once been a window" (30). Here, the symbolism of window is significant. The window is the connection with the outside world, mediating communion and provoking one's thought and vision. The very fact that the window has been intentionally bricked up by Marge's father symbolizes his attempt to terminate her connection to the external world, leaving her in isolation and fragmentation. With of all these, Marge's sense of insecurity and her vulnerability to mental illness gradually intensify. As she states, "when I was young, before mum left, I used to have this feeling that something bitter and dangerous lurked inside me. Other times it would be outside me. I would catch a glimpse of it from time to time out of the corner of my eye, but when I tried to look at it more closely it would be gone" (16). After prolonged torture, Marge suffers a final blow when she finds out that she has carried his father's baby. "So now I had a baby growing inside me. That meant when I was fifteen I would be a mum. It was hard to believe" (3). Being unable to bear this cruel fact, Marge's tendency to mental illness is triggered off and she experiences the first time in her life a mental breakdown. "I can remember shaking and then I heard a loud scream coming from somewhere inside my head ..." (3). Thereafter, Marge is taken to the medical institution where she is temporarily relieved from the oppression of her father.

In *Marge*, the positive representation of motherhood is intentionally juxtaposed against the menacing fatherhood. In *Women and Madness*, Chesler notes that women are motherless children in patriarchal society. By this, she means that women have had neither power nor wealth to hand on to their daughters. She states that "neither mother nor daughter can redeem the other from certain harsh realities that define the

female as 'mother' and 'loser' under bio-patriarchal rule" (58). To a large extent, Chesler resorts to "blaming the mother" for the daughter's disadvantaged position in patriarchy and perceives the mother-daughter relationship as almost negative. However, Kitty Fitzgerald has presented to us a different picture of mother-daughter relationship. The Oedipal rivalry, as Freud believed to have been existing between mother and daughter, is deconstructed in *Marge*, where the "supposed" rivalry is replaced by an intimate female bonding between Marge and her mother. Although Marge's mother seems to echo Chesler's notion of the "weak mother" as she appears to be a pale figure who suffers dumbly her husband's abuses, she is nonetheless also the source of support and comfort for Marge. From time to time in her self-narrative, Marge recalls the gracious days she shares with her mother. "[Mother] had a secret box of pictures which we used to look at when he wasn't there. Pictures of brightly dressed, happy people, of flowers and places far away. ... We had lots of special times like that. They fill me up with warmth when I think about them ..." (21-22). Even after her mother has left her, her images of warmth, love and care still retains in Marge's heart. "Mum's love was different, like being surrounded by warm rainbow colours. Not crushing me or choking me" (79).

After Marge has left the medical institution when she has somewhat recovered from her mental illness, she meets a woman, who, apart from her mother, becomes another important woman in her life. She is Maggie, a woman living across the street of her apartment. At the beginning of the story, Marge tells us that she is constantly watching someone, the one who "always had the windows wide open and never drew the curtains. The windows are big and she put lots of mirrors up in her room and painted it white" (1). From this description, we can see that Maggie has embodied at least three things that Marge is unable to obtain in her childhood – the big windows,

the large number of mirrors and the paintings. The big window symbolizes one's communion and connection to the outside world; the mirror represents one's acquisition of subjectivity; and painting allows imagination, aspiration and self-expression. Moreover, Marge lacks the courage and capability that Maggie has. Maggie is an active social participant who "spent long years in socialist politics, in trade unions, and in the woman's movement" (12). She "believes that men and women can discover joy, honesty and openness in their relationships, provided that men stop wanting to dominate, and maintain dual standards, and women refuse to resort to false submission" (18). Notably, the attachment Marge so naturally builds up with Maggie is to some extent out of her desire to possess the things she embodies – communion, autonomy, dignity and self-expression. More importantly, it also symbolizes her desire for maternal love. Being deprived of the right to enjoy affectionate love from her mother, Marge has unconsciously embarked on a search for the metaphoric or surrogate mother. Sharing so many similarities with Marge's mother, Maggie becomes a surrogate mother figure for her to identify with. Maggie is a divorced woman and has only one daughter called Chrissy. Although she does not live with her daughter as there seems to be some problems between them, Maggie "has always tried to put Chrissy first" and her own right behind (12). Maggie also resembles Marge's mother in the way that "she understands colours and how to place things together ... Like [Marge's] mum" (21). Marge once claims, "somehow Maggie makes me feel alive. My mum was like that too" (22). Ironically, she even resembles Marge's mother in the way that she is "concurrently being exploited by a more mundane manifestation of masculinity" (Munt 155), as she is attached to a ruthless boyfriend, called Joe, who abuses her loneliness and love.

Joe is a man who believes in the equation between humanity and brutality. He

says that "of course [the human race] is brutal, that's why it's survived. Brutality is the other side of survival's coin. It's impossible to separate them" (27). He is the incarnation of patriarchal evil, believing in masculine authoritativeness and domination. He argues with Maggie that "in the last hundred years a few scientists, *male* scientists, have done more to help the human race than all the windbag humanitarians put together" (101). He is also an insensitive and heartless misogynist who "sees women as intense leeches who want to suck the life out of men" (18). He is not willing to maintain a truly affectionate relationship with Maggie because he is afraid that he will be castrated by a woman like Maggie: "Of course she will not attack him with a knife. No, she will lure and manipulate him until he becomes emotionally dependent on her. Then she will reject and despise him. Joe makes no secret of the fact: he sees all women his way" (17). According to Freud, the castration complex in females is entirely centered on the penis-envy complex; and there is a general belief that "the girl desires throughout life to avenge herself on the man for possessing something which she lacks" (Horney 58). Rejecting this male-centered conception, the fear of Joe, as presented by the writer, reflects another side of the picture. The abhorrence that Joe maintains against women in general, on the one hand, represents his arrogant belief in masculine powerfulness and his interest in control and domination. On the other, it also exposes his lack of self-confidence and his unwillingness to recognize the validity of women's place in society and accept the reality of women's capability. The image of Joe reminds Marge largely of her own father. "He reminds [her] of something deep, something half-buried. His movements are those of someone fleeing from a bad memory" (15). Having identified Maggie with her mother and Joe with her father, Marge gradually transforms Joe into a "detested object," which becomes the cause of her hatred and target of

vengeance.

Marge's hatred for Joe intensifies tremendously, particularly after she suffers a second mental blow when she is put into the hands of the therapists who are supposed to cure her but have actually further victimized her. Although Marge is taken away from the threatening control of her father after his incestuous crime has been discovered, she is never safe from patriarchal menace. According to Sally R. Munt, "Marge is one of the few feminist crime fiction novels which contrives fictionally to represent the therapist metaphorically or actually as 'the rapist', a singularly antonymous reformulation originally employed by radical feminist philosopher Mary Daly (155). Through the case of Marge, Kitty Fitzgerald exposes the fact that psychotherapy is actually psychic patriarchy in action and is very much the enemy of women. Chesler, in "Patient and Patriarch: Women in the Psychotherapeutic Relationship," also states, "Contemporary psychiatric and psychological theories and practices both reflect and influence our culture's politically naïve understanding and emotionally brutal treatment of women. Female unhappiness is viewed and 'treated' as a problem of individual pathology ..." (251). R.D. Laing's opposition to traditional psychotherapeutic techniques reinforces Chesler's arguments:

> Psychotherapy consists in the paring away of all that stands between us, the props, marks, roles, lies, defenses, anxieties, projections and interjections, in short, all the carryovers from the past, transference and counter-transference, that we use by habit and collusion, wittingly or unwittingly, as our currency for relationship ... Of course, such techniques in the hands of a man who has not unremitting concern and respect for the patient could be disastrous (46-47).

Ironically, in *Marge*, apart from the male ones, neither do the female therapists have

the necessary "unremitting concern and respect for their patients." The medical institution that has kept Marge for so many years after she is taken away from her father; the apartment where Marge later receives "psychological treatment"; and the psychotherapists and social workers who are supposed to help her, are basically microcosms of the larger embodiment of social confinement, within which Marge experiences even more severe physical and spiritual imprisonment.

When Marge first appears in the story as the first-person narrator, she is already a forty-five-year-old woman who has left the medical institution and moved into an apartment. She has been "watching" Maggie constantly for a period of time and is gradually developing attachment to her privately. It appears that Marge's condition has once improved with her "watching" of Maggie, who becomes her spiritual support and an important source for her to identify with. Her social worker, Mrs Jenkins, even remarks that "over the last few weeks there has been a remarkable improvement [in Marge]. She has started taking care of herself and expressed the desire for a mirror, which indicates a growing concern for her body" (7). As Marge mentions, "someone said to me once, that when I stopped wanting to watch, then I would be a real person" (34). Here, she means that when she no longer needs anyone to identify with and that she can assert a self-identity, she will recover. However, her situation deteriorates tremendously after she is put in the hands of the merciless therapist and social worker. While her first mental illness is attributed to the brutalization her father imposes on her, her further derangement is a result of social exploitation. Right before Marge is further victimized by the "professional," she has already suffered from institutional imprisonment. The very fact that Marge's condition only improves after she has left the lunatic asylum highly suggests that social institutions like the asylum only work to confine and imprison people, making them lose contact

with the reality and the norm and forcing them into one character of gentle compliance. Similarly, the social workers and the therapists, those "professionals" who are supposed to help their patients, have nonetheless traumatized them ruthlessly. To Marge, her first social worker, Mrs Jenkins, "is too woolly and comfortable" (6). She's always trying to "understand," which to Marge, is different from "caring," since trying to "understand" means trying to "tramp around each other's personal places and personal pain," leading merely to "sadness and despair" (22). While Mrs Jenskin is at least still sensitive enough to remark that "[Marge]'s special, she needs love and affection, and time to readjust" (49), her competitor Mrs Collins, who is very keen to get Marge involved in her encounter group sessions as her interest has been aroused by Marge's improvement, is totally insensitive and inconsiderate. To Mrs Jenskin, she is a "highly unstable hypocrite" (24), a callous woman, having no humanity and compassion, and Marge is just another case study to her (45). The place where she gathers and treats patients is negatively portrayed:

> It is a very large, grand building, part consulting rooms, part residential ... . When they were built, scores of years past, their purpose was to impress, to dwarf, symbolizing the power of wealth gained through exploitation. Today they are owned, not by families so much as corporations and bureaucracies ... their original purpose is still maintained. Domination" (24).

Once Marge enters the place, she is mercilessly entrapped. The encounter group Marge joins represents her journey toward confrontation, alienation, repression, and finally, her split. During the meeting, Marge feels very uncomfortable about Mrs Collin's smile. "How I wish her smile would disintegrate. I can almost see the skull behind the flesh" (38). She reminds Marge of her Maths teacher, Mrs Berne,

who would only listen to things she wants to hear. Marge discovers that everyone in the group is scared of Mrs Collin. They are all like caged up animals in the zoo, with a "defected look" reflected in their eyes, as if "there is no hope in them any longer" (38). Marge even exclaims that Mrs Collin is "a controller" who "gets [her] trapped here so that she can control [her]" (40). Mrs Collin is very much like the kind of therapist Chesler detests so much as she has committed the same mistake as Freud:

> Freud believed that the psychoanalyst-patient relationship must be that of "a superior and a subordinate." The psychotherapist has been seen – by his critics as well as his patients – as a surrogate patent (father or mother), savior, lover, expert, and teacher – all roles that foster "submission, dependency, and infantilism" in the patient: roles that imply the therapist's omniscient and benevolent superiority and the patient's inferiority (1971: 262).

At a result, Marge is driven into further mental breakdown. Despite her mental deterioration, however, it is also the first time in her life that she feels the urge to rebel against her oppressors. Among the patients in the group, Marge finds the reincarnation of her father figure in a nasty man called Larry, who has sexual perversion and always "splits out words of badness" (39). She claims that "maybe he's dad! He said something about dads earlier. Maybe he is" (40). Although he continues to harass Marge and another very timid girl called Sharon with his dirty words, Mrs Collin makes no attempt to stop him. The image of the fragile and timid Sharon reminds Marge of herself who had once been so weak and helplessly suffered the brutality of her father. Marge decides that she should no longer passively accepts her tragic fate. Seeing that Larry suddenly bends to kiss Sharon, Marge feels "something snap violently in [her] head as [she moves] towards him. Suddenly,

[Marge is] so full of power that no one can stop [her]. There's only one thing [she knows]. 'He must be stopped. She must be protected'" (42). When Marge fights back, she finds that she is actually entangling her own father. She screams:

> Dad is trying to pin me down, to hold me, to smother me. NOT THIS TIME. I'm letting it all out. All the loss of mum, all those years of sitting quiet. ALL OF IT. He shouts that I'm mad. Laughter leaps from my throat. I stop his mouth from working. No more, dad. No more. Marge is coming out ..." (42).

What does it mean by "Marge is coming out?" It could be said that Marge is even more "mad" as she shows all the symptoms of "madness" at the moment of encountering Larry. In a deeper sense, however, it actually symbolizes her "enlightenment" and "empowerment." After the meeting, Marge is "disillusioned." Her experience in this most poignant moment reveals that the civilized world, priding itself on its rationality, in effect depends on exploitation. Beneath the fastidious social order symbolized by the figure of Mrs Collins, Marge discerns a predatory disorder. Marge understands that she is not going to receive any help from society. She is the only one who can save herself and other weak women from victimization. The male social worker that Mrs Collin later assigns to her to replace Mrs Jenskin further affirms Marge's belief. Bill Medwynter is a ruthless social worker who is "so busy trying to get [his patients'] clothes off or make them feel inferior" (49). He loves his job because "it gives him a sense of power" and he "likes best to deal with females" as "he gains a distorted sexual gratification from having them slightly at his mercy" (64). The spiritual and physical sexual harassment he imposes on Marge has driven her to further frustration.

The time that the "Goddess" merges into Marge's life is significant. After the

event with Mrs Collin, Marge begins to have "delusions." She is addressed by the female goddesses of Gaealand who wish to "destroy Chronus" in his intention of fathering a new son. Within the theistic tradition of the West, since the tradition generally lacks feminine symbolism of the divine, people "are disposed to conceive of the divine in masculine terms and images" (Olson 1). In *Madness in Literature*, Lilian Feder states that "the mad gods and characters of ancient myth have permeated psychoanalytic and imaginative literature of the twentieth century" (37). Among the mad gods, Dionysus has always been regarded as the prototype to illuminate the symptoms of insanity. Dionysus, "the god known for his power to inflict madness on others and was himself once afflicted with madness," is generally regarded as "a primordial mythical construct of the growing human capacity to conceptualize perception, emotion, motivation, action, and, most important, control" (40). In *Marge*, Kitty Fitzgerald has re-appropriated the Greek mythology of madness and replaces the mad God with the Goddesses. The growing interest in goddess thematics that "reemerges in late twentieth-century Western culture" (Gardon 3), is stimulated by recent work on the prehistoric and ancient Mother Goddess, particularly by documentation of archaeological findings.[1] According to Dawne MaCane, "the search for lost voices, for myths and symbols excluded from patriarchal tradition, manifests itself as a 'quest for the goddess'" (165). Among many contemporary religious feminists, "the simple and most basic meaning of the Goddess is female power as a legitimate, benevolent, and independent force" (Gardon 123). Theologian Carol Christ, a pioneer in the Women's Spirituality Movement, so succinctly puts it in her essay, "Why Women Need the Goddess," that "the real importance of the symbol of Goddess is that it breaks the power of the patriarchal symbol of God as male over the psyche" (274). In *Marge*, the Goddesses are depicted as creative figures with

strong, resourceful and dynamic characters. They are also associated with demonic and destructive power – a virtually inconceivable, overpowering aspect that threatens death and darkness. The Goddesses appear to Marge in three different figures, reminding us of the Trinity of Christian God. Megaera brings Marge with "the strength of knowledge and intellect" (62); Magog provides her with "corporeal strength of flesh and blood" (62); Margaret, the "Saint for reasons," helps to sharpen Marge's perception (73). They come to Marge with a special destiny which is to be accomplished by her – to destroy Cronus. Cronus is a Greek god who swallows his own offspring to avoid being dethroned. Fouled by his wife Rhea, he does not swallow his sixth son, Zeus, who later grows up and defeats him. According to the Goddesses, Cronus has come back and is seeking offspring. The mission of Marge is to once again exterminate him, unman him and cast him into Tartarus, the home of wickedness forever. The re-appropriation of this myth by Kitty Fitzgerald has a number of significance. Cronus, as he is presented in the Greek mythology, symbolizes tyranny, dominance and brutality. The destruction of him, in a ritual sense, means the abolition of the menace he embodies. Moreover, the fact that Marge, instead of Zeus, is going to be the executioner this time suggests the displacement of masculine power with feminine power.

Apart from Cronus, Fitzgerald also contrives to re-structure certain myths in her story in order to re-position and re-grant women's validity in human history. First of all, she deconstructs the biblical accusation of Eve as the femme fatale. According to Goddess Margaret, the origin of men's suspicion and hatred for women does not come from the women's fragile morality and seductiveness, but from their refusal to be submissive. She claims that before Eve, Adam actually has a wife called Lilith. Unlike Eve, Lilith is wild and strong and refuses to be servile and demean herself.

She argues that as she and Adam both originate in earth dust they are equal. As a result, the Lord casts her out. Ever since Lilith claims equality with Adam, his predecessors generally form a sense of hatred against women and attempt to enforce their submissiveness (73-74). In another reconstructed myth, Goddess Margaret states that it is the goddess Ama-Terasu who controls the source of light in the world (85-86). The symbol of Goddess and the reconstruction of myths, as according to Christ Carol, "[have] much to offer women who are struggling to be rid of the 'powerful, pervasive, and long-lasting moods and motivations' of devaluation of female power, denigration of the female body, distrust of female will, and denial of the women's bonds and heritage that have been engendered by patriarchal religion" (286).

One should not regard the Goddesses as the external intruders who enter the life of Marge on an occasion. They are actually Marge's "interior" externalized when her unconscious merges into the conscious, signaling the coming up of her repressed unconscious self to take revenge. The dialogues between Marge and the Goddesses are symbolic, rather than literal. They are not conversations between two parties, but internal dialogues between two parts of the split self. The personal dialogues between Marge and the Goddesses, or rather, her contact with them which is concealed from the public eye, ushers her attempt to empower herself through detaching herself from the patriarchal definition of normality and eventually avenge through murder. If Marge's first experience of mental illness which is resulted from her father's brutalization only makes her weak, fragile and vulnerable, her second experience of mental deterioration after Mrs Collin's encounter group makes her all the more powerful. Her "insanity" becomes a kind of extraordinary sanity. As Goddess Megaera states:

> That is where you and I are now Marzge, outside rationality, abnormal ...

> but that does not mean less than normal, merely different. Only by stepping sideways into possibilities like this can we be truly alive ... . You see, all sorts of people and things are called insane, for the word covers a vast range of behaviours. True insanity is the ability to see and experience, knowingly, the other side of normal. As in good and bad, it is impossible to know one without knowing the other (54-55).

Perceiving "insanity" as a mind more sufficiently sensitive to apprehend reality objectively has always been a recurrent theme in twentieth century Western women's literature. In Doris Lessing's *Four-Gated City*, for instance, the protagonist Matha can observe the "reality" while others cannot. She contemplates, "there's something wrong with me that I do see what's going on as ugly, as if I were the only person awake and everyone else is in a kind of bad dream, but they couldn't see that they were" (68). In *The Politics of Experience*, L.D. Laing writes that "only by the most outrageous violation of ourselves have we achieved our capacity to live in relative adjustment to a civilization apparently driven to its own destruction" (32). The "insanity" of Marge is thus a "sane" way for her to survive in an oppressive society. She becomes a self-proclaimed "mad" person who is able to go beyond the surface of reality and penetrate into the nightmare vision of society, which is predominantly occupied by "that aspect of maleness which condones war, brutality, torture in the name of democracy and peace" (24).

The "destiny" of Marge is to destroy "Cronus" who has come back to seek offspring. To Marge, the spirit of Cronus equates the haunting spirit of her father which comes back again and again and is incarnated into different figures to haunt her. Mrs Collin, Bill Medwynter, Larry and Joe all embody his haunting spirit. With her identification with Maggie, a women resembling her mother in numerous ways, Marge

has decided to save herself, Maggie, her mother and also the victimized women in general through a ritualistic murder. She has decided to murder Joe, who to her is the incarnation of Cronus, her own father, and all patriarchal evil. Before Marge accomplishes her destiny, the Goddesses (and in a deeper sense her "madness"), has endowed her with intellectual and physical strength. In public, she becomes "calm, polite, controlled and even sometimes witty" (53). In order to carry out her secret plan, Marge is forced to repress her strongest emotion. She suppresses her innermost feeling and conforms to act out the social manners. By cheating her "helpers" with her pretended normality, Marge has metaphorically "deconstructed" the hypocritical and male-dominated psychological therapy that imprisons her, symbolizing her liberation from the confinement of the social institution into the freedom of her own "insane" world. While Marge continues to play her role as the obedient patient, accepting "help" from her social workers, her truest self, the inner turmoil of her female psyche, and her needs to commit some fiercely impulsive deed (to take revenge) are externalized in the paintings she has done (91-92). This hatred and rage, which has been repressed for so long, finally explodes. When Marge finds out that Maggie has got pregnant, she determines to kill Joe immediately, so as to "stop Cronus from coming back to father a son." To Marge, the patriarchal oppression cannot be reincarnated again and again. It has to be stopped. She proclaims, "perhaps I've let down more people than I can remember. Mum, her [the Art teacher], friends at school. Because I'm a distorted thing. Because I'm only half a person. But now I have a chance to make up, to do something" (107). The final outburst of Marge's mental disorder comes when she exercises her uncanny power to take revenge. The elements of rebellion and rage latent in the phenomenon of her "madness" has become explicit and externalized. With a burning hot red anger, Marge finally accomplishes

her task. She is strong this time. "The little girl has gone" (142). Marge has done four thrusts to terminate Joe's life. "One for mum. One for me [Marge]. One for Maggie. And one for you [Joe]" (142). To Marge, the murder is done both physically and psychologically. The two males – Joe and her father – become identical to each other. Joe is killed physically. Her father, who comes back again and again to haunt her existence, is murdered metaphorically. The predatory patriarchal culture that victimizes Marge as well as all the helpless prey, including her mother and Maggie, is destroyed.

Tie Ning's *The Cliff in the Afternoon*[2]

Tie Ning's *The Cliff in the Afternoon* pivots around the figure of the Chinese daughter as the murderous woman. The title of the story indicates the time and situation of the occurrence of a murder. The murder is committed by the female protagonist, Han Guixin 韓桂心 when she is only a five-year-old little girl in the kindergarten. The victim is her classmate, a boy of the same age called Chen Fei 陳非, "the second person [Han] hates since she was born, while [her] father is the first one" 這是我有生以來恨的第二個人，第一個是我父親 (26). The story is centered around the cause and aftermath of the murder. While in *Marge* the whole story predominantly concentrates on the pre-murder narration, putting the cause of murder as the focus, this story is largely about the consequence of the murder, particularly its effect on the murderer. The story begins with a description of the funeral of the narrator's grandmother, a ninety-year old woman who had once been the mayor of a city and had suffered throughout half of her life brutalization from her husband. At the funeral, the narrator finds herself unable to shed even a tiny drop of tear because her should-be affection is annoyed by the hypocritical atmosphere created

by the hypocritical funeral goers. To the narrator, the sense of death at the funeral does not refer to someone's physical death, but to the death of people's conscience and morality. After the funeral, she goes to the Martyr Imperial Mausoleum, a place of solemnity and dignity, where she meets the protagonist of our story, Han Guixin. The first impression Han gives the narrator is atypical. Her appearance is very masculine – tall and strong, fashionably dressed. She smokes "Camel," a brand very popular among the American haulers and mazdoors. What's more, she looks somewhat neurotic: "She casually holds the cigarette with one hand, and her eyes neurotically and yet harmlessly points at me" 她一只手很瀟灑地托著煙, 兩只眼有些神經質地然而決無惡意地看著我 (10). Although Han Guixin is a stranger to the narrator, she suddenly comes to her to "confess her crime." She tells the narrator a life story of her own, uncovering a hidden secret she has tried hard to conceal throughout her life.

Some day in the afternoon in 1958, when Han Guixin is still a five-year old little girl, she kills a boy called Chen Fei at the playground of the kindergarten by pushing him off the slide when they are playing. Chen Fei is an Indonesian Chinese who comes from a very rich family. Han Guixin kills the boy not only because she has a deeply imbedded sense of hatred against men in general, but also she is driven mad by a choking sense of jealousy which is prematurely implanted in her. She murders Chen Fei because he owns an electric toy, "Monkey Wants Money" 小猴要錢, which is to her the symbol of wealth and power she so desperately craves. Han Guixin's mother, Zhang Meifang 張美芳, who works as a teacher in the kindergarten, is the only witness of this incident. In order to protect her own daughter, Zhang Meifang makes up a lie to conceal the truth. Thereafter, the mother-daughter relationship has drastically changed, in which they enter into a psychological battle. Zhang Meifang

makes use of the crime to control and possess Han Guixin. As Han Guixin herself states, "the reason that I cannot detach from her is that in her hands she has held the evidence of the crime in my life" 可我之所以無法脫離她, 正因爲她手中有我一生的罪証 (36). Resenting against her mother's possessiveness and manipulation, Han Guixin tortures her by intentionally and frequently threatening to expose the truth of the crime. The antagonistic but indelible relationship between Han Guixin and her mother Zhang Meifang remains unchanged until they undergo another torture in their life – the outbreak of the Cultural Revolution. The endurance they share in the revolution has somehow effaced the intensity of their relationship. After Han Guixin has grown up, she marries a man who runs a real estate business. This man is physically weaker than her and she "is satisfied with [her] husband's height and the way he looks up to reach [her face]" 我滿意我丈夫的身高和他仰臉看我的樣子 (50). Although Han Guixin has led a very comfortable life with her husband, the haunting shadow of her crime has never been removed. Although she can escape from legal sanction, yet she receives another form of punishment – infertility. The infertility of Han Guixin drives her husband to other women. Recognizing that it is impossible for her to lose her husband and the inheritance of his great property, Han Guixin struggles to cure her infertility. As she believes that this physical deficiency is a damnation resulted from her evil deed (the murder she has committed), she resolves to redeem herself by confessing her sin. She comes to the narrator and tells her the whole truth (she even asks the narrator to record her story) and plans to confess directly to the victim's father. However, her confession does not bring the result she has expected. Instead of being able to redeem herself, Han Guixin is regarded by her listeners as having mental illness and is almost sent to the sanatorium. Finding that it is impossible to obtain salvation through confession, Han Guixin leaves the narrator

and is never seen again.

It is significant to note although Tie Ning's *The Cliff in the Afternoon* adopts a confessional mode in which the protagonist, Han Guixin confesses her crime to the narrator who plays the role of listener-confessor, there is a gap of perception between the narrator who plays the role of the listener-confessor and the protagonist who confesses. In the Western tradition, confession means the verbal exposure of one's own thoughts or deeds hitherto unknown to others.[3] It suggests the hidden and dark side of the secrets and reveals a personal anxiety that is hard to fathom. Or in Thomas DeQuincey's words, confession is "the public exposure of our own errors and infirmities" and "tearing away that decent drapery."[4] This Western sense of confessional sentiments, with the emergence of first-person narrative in Chinese fiction since the May Fourth era, also dominates the Chinese mind in the 20th century.[5] In *The Cliff in the Afternoon*, Han Guixin is an afflicted and unbalanced heroine who reveals and reviews with pain her unknown past as well as her innermost thoughts, in an introverted effort to arrive at some kind of redemption. She attempts to master her past through repentance or justification. Han Guixin's confession is ruled by two equally forceful impulses: the need for punishment and the desire of forgiveness and acceptance. On the one hand, to pronounce her own guilt in public amounts to her self-willed punishment; on the other, her outright divulgence of her transgressions may serve at least as a basis for the remission of sin. However, since the narration of one's misdeeds can hardly develop smoothly without some explanation of motivations, from time to time the explanation may take over the narration and turn it toward a self-justifying apologia (Ngai 42). Therefore, Han Guixin's confession, instead of truly recognizing her sin, actually serves as the purpose of self-justification and as an invitation for the sympathetic sharing of her secrets. Detecting the truth by herself,

the narrator adopts a detached manner to Han Guixin's confession.

The meanings of Tie Ning's *The Cliff in the Afternoon* is highly complex. First of all, through the confession by Han Guixin who has committed murder at an abnormally early age, the writer has uncovered the menace of patriarchal oppression which is embodied in the father figure (also the husband figure) in victimizing women, driving them to mental derangement or psychological abnormality. Secondly, like that in *Marge*, the writer has also addressed the relationship between madness and female empowerment, mainly through the character of Han Guixin's mother, Zhang Meifang. Thirdly, she criticizes the evil deeds of the exploitative and hypocritical politics, which has not only worked to victimize women but also erode people's morality. The viciousness of Han Guixin's psychology, her "wicked" scheming, and all the "negative" aspects of her nature, are in fact a "detail" of the patriarchal society. Nevertheless, although the writer, in rejecting the stereotyped image of femininity, has created an anti-traditional heroine who is strong-willed, demonic and mean,[6] she does not approve the deeds of Han Guixin, nor does she accept her confession. Instead of interpreting Han's psychological abnormality as her source of empowerment and the murder she has committed as a successful attempt to subvert patriarchal oppression, Tie Ning looks at them as the cause of her imprisonment and damnation. To Tie Ning, the murder committed by Han Guixin, or the way Han's mother control her own daughter, symbolizes their reenactment of male brutality. Having a strong desire to avenge their victimization in the patriarchal society, these women have unconsciously imitated their wrongdoers in their attempt to revenge. Murder itself is a brutal violence. The possessiveness of Han Guixin's mother also recalls the dominating nature of her father. With their internalization of the patriarchal values and reenactment of patriarchal brutality, Han Guixin and her mother, instead of relieving

themselves from patriarchal oppression, have ironically further entrapped themselves.

The father figure in *Marge* is terribly oppressive. In *The Cliff in the Afternoon*, the case is no better. At the very beginning of the story, we have already been introduced to the power of patriarchal oppression. The narrator's grandmother, who died at a late age and had once been the mayor of a city, had experienced in a large part of her life disastrous spiritual and physical brutalization. The narrator's grandfather, who was originally a soldier, always humiliates her grandmother in front of the others and beats her up during the night in order to maintain his deformed sense of self-respect. His platitude is "Though no one is afraid of me during the day, I am not afraid of anyone at night" 白天誰怕我，晚上我怕誰 (5). By this, he means even if he is not powerful in front of the others and that no one would be afraid of him during the day, he would become superior and is not afraid of anyone when he is alone with his wife during the night. This patriarchal tradition which is governed by male supremacy originates among the victimized females a strong sense of resentment against it. As the narrator herself admits, she detests her grandfather a lot. Han Guixin's father is also Han's primary source of resentment. Although Han Guixin never meets her father since Zhang Meifang has already divorced him before she was born, her hatred against him is inflicted upon her by Zhang. When Han Guixin was still a baby, she had been made to listen to her mother muse about her father. Han Guixin has already stated at the very beginning of her confession that her hatred against her father, which is inherited from her mother and infiltrates drop by drop into her blood vessel from the very first day she enters the world, is predestined and irreversible. She said:

> Maybe you wouldn't believe me. As a person, I have already grown up in five minutes after I was born. I believe it is all because of my mother.

> Since I can hear sound, all I hear is my mother's voice. She talks to me like she is talking to an adult, and the content is all that about the adults. Without getting my approval, she has already concluded that I can understand … . Her main topics is to berate my father …
>
> 我這個人，說來你也許不信，我生下來五分鐘之後就長大了。我想這原因歸結于我母親。從我能聽見聲音，我聽見的就是我母親的聲音。她像對一個大人那樣對我說話，說的也是大人的事，也不徵得我的同意，就認定我能聽懂 …… 她的主要話題是跟我罵我父親 …… (13)

Through the mouth of her mother, Han Guixin has mentally experienced the great humiliation and torture she suffers. Han's father is a psychologically deformed person, who is brought up in an oppressive family. He is originally an ambitious, aggressive and arrogant careerist, fancying to become the greatest musician. However, the fact that one of his ears has been hit to deafness by his father destroys his dream. With his self-dignity seriously damaged, he becomes savagely oppressive. He transfers all the pain he suffers from his tyrannical father and the humiliation imposed on him by society to his wife Zhang Meifang. Zhang says, "… . He has intentionally concealed and reserved his sulk and pent-up resentment against the world and wreaks them to me once he gets home and closes the door" 他是有意隱藏著積懷著他在這個世界上所有的郁悶不快，回到家來關起門向我渲泄 (18). Every so often, he sadistically beats Zhang Meifang up until she apologizes and begs for his forgiveness. Again, Zhang Meifang says, "I gradually discovers that his beating me up is only a vicious prelude. After that he forces me to speak up. He makes me speak up only because he wants me to apologize and repents to him ever and ever" 我漸漸發現他打我只是一場惡戰的序幕，打完還要我開口，而他要我開口的最終目的是讓我永生永世向他認錯 (16). Zhang Meifang's voice is silenced. She is

given no right to explain or to express herself, all she can do is to repent and apologize. Because of this, she is gradually driven into a state of mental disorder:

In order to command a total submission from his wife, Han Guixin's father even forces her to submit a written statement of repentance every time they have a quarrel. Zhang Meifang is deprived of the right to speak for herself and write for herself, as her spoken words and written words become the tools for forced repentance. Gradually, Zhang Meifang's mental condition deteriorates. When it comes to a moment that Zhang Meifang can no longer bear the torture, her self-control breaks down. She hurts her husband by cutting off his thumb and divorces him.

Although Zhang Meifang has already divorced her husband before Han Guixin was born, she never let go her hatred. She inflicts the painful memory she suffers upon her daughter even when she was still a baby. Although Han Guixin never encounters her father, his image becomes an object of loathing in her memory. As Han Guixin herself admits, her father is the first one in the world she hates (26). Han Guixin's antagonism against him prefigures the early fixation of her character – she has a deep-rooted sense of hatred against male. As Xu Qun 徐坤 remarks in her article, "Subversion: A Textual Strategy" 顛覆: 作爲一種文本策略 [Dian fu: Zhuo wei yi zong men ben ce lui], "since the day Han Guixin was born, she has sucked through the milk from the body of her mother Zhang Meifang a deeply rooted sense of hatred against men." 這是打其出生那天就從母親張美方的奶水裡吸吮而出的對于男人刻骨銘心的仇恨(138). This prefiguration of Han Guixin's character foreshadows her psychological abnormality when she grows up. The murder she commits at the age of five to some extent reflects her serious antagonism against men in general, in which the image of her father is her origin of hatred. Although there is no direct confrontation between Han Guixin and her father, she has unavoidably

inherited every bit of hatred against him from her mother. As a daughter, Han Guixin can never escape from the haunt of the oppressive father figure. They have no physical encounter, but their blood relationship can never be reversed or removed. Han Guixin's killing of the boy, to some extent, represents her attempt to kill the detestable father figure.

While in *Marge* the vicious fatherhood is juxtaposed by nourishing motherhood, the mother in *The Cliff in the Afternoon* is not portrayed as positively as it should be. Han Guixin's mother Zhang Meifang is not a traditional "virtuous wife and good mother" 賢妻良母 [xian qi liang mu] as defined in Confucianism. In "Deconstruction of character stereotyping: New Position in Chinese women's writing" 解構角色定規 – 中國女性書寫的新立場 [Jiegou jiaoxe dingju: Zhongguo nuxin shushe de xin lichang], Lin Danya 林丹婭 remarks that since more Chinese women writers have consciously written about themselves at the beginning of the 20th century, the representation of the mother figure has undergone different stages of change in the past hundred years. The first stage is the May-Fourth writings. During the burst of literary activism in the wake of the May Fourth Movement of 1919, an idealized maternal figure becomes a staple of China's New Literature. She appears as a gentle, nurturing figure, selflessly and naturally loving, sometimes suffering (Lieberman 19). According to Lin,

> It seems that the May Fourth women writers happen to have coincidentally employed the strategy which was used by Wu Zetian, the only woman emperor in Chinese history in order to uphold women's power – manifest motherhood in order to contend the despotic and corruptive fatherhood; while at the same time they also publicize the fact that their gender has been victimized and marginalized. … However, to use this strategy is to have an

> inevitable sacrifice since the strategy is submissive to the perspective of the male-centered value system … . Accordingly, the mothers being portrayed are all the sacrificial "virtuous wife and good mother" under the measure of the patriarchal judgement.
>
> 五四女性似乎是不約而同地襲用了中國有史以來唯一女皇帝武曌抬高女權時所用的辦法 (彰揚母道，以抗衡專制而腐助的父道)，同時也藉此彰揚了自己一類被剝奪了生命價值、總是處於書寫邊緣的性別。…… 但在這個策略中，它又無可避免地必須以順從男性本位價值觀的視點爲代價 …… 因此，她們個個都是父權規範標桿上衡量出來的富有犧牲精神的 "賢妻良母"。(127-128)

In the 1940's, Zhang Ailang [Eileen Zhang] was an outstanding writer who had in some sense "deconstructed" the stereotypical mother. Through extremely internal reflection, she portrays an image of a female who is neither an virtuous wife nor a good mother, but is abnormal, unconventional and even psychologically defective (Qi Qiao of *The Golden Cangue* is a representing example)" 她以極端的內體驗，書寫出那失常的脫序的還有些心理變態的既非賢妻更非良母的女性形象 (可以〈金鎖記〉中的七巧爲代表) (Lin 128). Beginning in the 1980s, more and more female writers work to deconstruct the stereotypical mother image. Under their portrayal, the mother is no longer the embracing, sacrificial nurturer. Rather, she can be vicious, jealous, possessive, insane and even destructive. As Lin remarks, "they no longer praise the virtue and merits of motherhood. Instead, they turn to search for their own root from their ugliness, so as to thoroughly unlock themselves from the previous relationship they have been defined, and destroy the old culture they have inherited" 她們不再歌功頌德，她們要從自身的醜陋上追根溯源，徹底解除產生自己的舊有關係，破壞自身的舊文化遺傳 (133).

In *The Cliff in the Afternoon*, the representation of motherhood is also non-stereotypical. The mother and the wife, Zhang Meifang, has once been submissive and fragile but has later transformed into an empowered rebellious and destructive wife, and also a possessive mother. While denoting her changes, like what Kitty Fitzgerald has done in *Marge*, Tie Ning has also associated Zhang Meifang's transformation and empowerment with her mental derangement. Finding the exploitation and oppression of her husband unbearable, Zhang Meifang discloses more and more symptoms of hysteria along the course of her suffering. At the same time, she is empowered by her madness. For instance, she begins to scream and laugh during her turmoil:

> I begin to laugh. Let me tell you. Only if a person has undergone thorough desperation can she understand the essence of freedom and the true acquisition of it. In the past, I quarrelled with your father because I wanted to seek help by working out solution through the quarrel and attain a mutual understanding with him. In reality, however, hoping to rely on any external help is in itself anti-freedom. Now I am laughing, and only when a person is under such an extremely desperate situation can she laugh so heartlessly and unrestrictedly.
>
> 我笑起來，我告訴你人在徹底無助的時候才能明白什麼叫自由，什麼叫真正獲得了自由。以往我和你爸所有的爭吵都因爲我老想求助于什麼，求助于我們能吵出個道理彼此達到溝通。老想求助于什麼本身就是不自由的。現在我笑著，人在徹底無助的境況下才會有這麼坦蕩的無遮無擋的大笑。(18)

In *Reading Women*, Mary Jacobus remarks that the notion of dumbness and utterance, of demand for an impossible desire, forms a recurrent motif in women's writing (29).

Notably, Zhang Meifang screams and laughs at the moment of lunacy constitutes her repressed desire for utterance and release of turmoil. Her hysterical laughter, in particular, like that of a hyena and of a maniac, symbolizes a breach of the patriarchal language system. Finding that she is incapable of expressing herself through words or writings as they are discourse of patriarchy, Zhang Meifang has chosen a particular way to release herself. She laughs resoundingly to utter and release her pain and desire.

Zhang Meifang's resentment against her husband has also been "implicitly externalized" as a physical symptom. On one occasion, Zhang's husband grabbed her neck and drove her away after they had a quarrel. Thereafter, her neck will inexplicably swell and redden, and becomes unbearably itchy every time she sees his hands. This physical symptom, to a large extent, reflects Zhang Meifang's psychological rebellion against her husband. Having resolved that there is no reason for her to bear the maltreatment any longer, Zhang Meifang gradually transforms her desire to rebel into action, letting her body speak what the voice cannot. The more insane she becomes, the more aggressive she is.

> Once, [my neck] feels so itchy that I almost scream aloud. I want very much to scold your father that if he dares to grab the back of my neck again I will cut his hands off. I yell it in my heart. Indeed, instead of feeling so scared of quarreling with him as I have been before, I now look forward to seeing him stir things up again … It's really a vicious wish and a venomous excitement; I deeply want to cut your father's hands off.
>
> 有一次我癢得沒有辦法幾乎就大聲喊起來，我想衝你爸說只要你再膽敢伸手抓我的後脖領我就剁掉你的手! 我心裏喊著，簡直由從前的害怕吵架到盼著他尋機鬧事了 …… 那簡直是一種惡意的企盼陰毒的快感

啊我多麼想剁掉你爸的手。(19)

Zhang Meifang's violent thought and behaviour represents her uproarious resentment against her husband's oppressive control and his persecution of her rights to speak and write for herself. Ultimately, she takes an action to avenge her wrongdoer – she cuts off the right hand thumb of her husband. This incident reverses Zhang Meifang's relation to her husband. "He swings his bloody hand without the thumb, and seems to feel no pain at all. He begs [Han Guixin's] mother to stop quarrel forever and he is willing take the initiation to swear for this" 他擺動著他那缺小了小拇指的血淋淋的手，像根本不覺疼痛似的。他央告我母親今生今世停止吵架，他願意先發誓 …… (22). Originally a plain and timid woman, Zhang Meifang becomes an aggressor with demonic power. She is no longer "the idealized and submissive wife" 賢妻 [xian qi]. She becomes an agent to frustrate the patriarchal authority by enacting a violent action, in which the action itself embodies a "text" with herself being the author, narrating her pain and turmoil in patriarchal domination which has silenced her voice and self-expression for long. The compliance of Zhang Meifang's husband after the incident, to some extent, represents the triumph of Zhang's attempt to subvert the patriarchal tyranny her husband represents.

The fact that Zhang Meifang divorces her husband represents her detachment from his oppressive control. Nevertheless, she is never unlocked from the patriarchal discourse. Although her husband has been physically removed from her life, the influence of him, or in a deeper sense, the patriarchal discourse he symbolizes, is still affecting her life, but in a different way. Since Zhang Meifang has suffered great humiliation and torture from her husband, she inconsiderably pours all her anger and resentment into the heart of her own daughter, paving the way for her committing murder at a terrifically early age. Being victimized in her marriage, Zhang Miefang

has yet internalized the patriarchal strictures to discipline, police, control and manipulate her own daughter, in which she unconsciously plays the role of the father figure.

It seems that the mother-daughter relationship between Zhang Meifang and Han Guixin is very intimate. Zhang Meifang once claims, "Han Guixin, I know you can understand me. If in this world I can have you to be of one mind and one heart with me, your mom, what else should I be scared of ?" 我就知道你能聽懂韓桂心，在這個世界上，能有你跟媽一條心，媽還有什麼可怕的 ... (19). Han Guixin also says that she has a very close bondage with her mother: "I have to be at one with mom Zhang Meifang because in this world nobody is going to help us" 我必須和張美方媽媽同心同德，因爲這在世界上沒人能幫我們 (23).

Han Guixin and Zhang Meifang is mutually reliable on each other. Nevertheless, in a deeper sense, Han Guixin does not find her relationship with her mother comfortable. As she admits, the love of her mother is so intense that it chokes her and makes her feel suspicious.

> Since she loses her husband, she has paid all her attention to me. She loves me so whole-heartedly that it makes me feel suspicious. I believe this is something related to my father – she puts up a combat with her ex-husband, wanting him to know that even though she is divorced, she can still lead a life and bring me up all by herself. Because of this she has tried every effort to let me lead a happy life.
>
> 自從她失掉了丈夫，就把注意力完全集中到我身上，她死心塌地地愛著我，愛得讓我起疑: 我認爲這裡有和我父親 – 她的前夫較量的成分，她要讓他看看，她並不是離了他不行，她單槍匹馬也能把我撫育成人。爲此她盡可能讓我生活得愉快。(23-24)

In order to prove her own validity, Zhang Meifang takes advantage of her motherhood. She uses abusive love to imprison Han Guixin, turning her into an object for herself to prove her independence. At the very beginning of her confession, when Han Guixin states that "she has grown up within five minutes after she was born" (13), the psychological imprisonment she is going to experience under the dominance of her mother is foreshadowed. When Zhang Meifang passes the pain she has experienced to her own daughter, she is at the same time depriving her of all possible youthful hopes and happiness. Without choice, Han Guixin is forced to inherit the past of her mother, which largely deters the health of her psychological growth. Although she is not as "mad" as her mother has once been, there is a fundamental strangeness in her character. The very fact she becomes a murderer at a terribly early age suggests her psychological deformity.

Tie Ning's vision of the mother-daughter relationship, as represented in *The Cliff in the Afternoon*, is tragic. While the identification between Marge and her mother constitutes a female bonding, the relationship between Han Guixin and her mother suggests a cyclical relationship between the manipulator and the manipulated. It reflects that the vicious effect which the institution of the patriarchy inflicts upon women is irrevocable. In "Two Western Discourses of Femininity and Chinese Womanhood" 西方對女性意識的兩個論述模式與中國女性 [Xifang dui nuxin yishi de liangge lunshu moshi yu zhongguo nuxin], Kwok-kan Tam 譚國根 illuminates the inapplicability of such western notions like psychoanalytic self and ego identity to elucidate Chinese womanhood, as the development of Chinese selfhood is largely associated with "a psychosomatic process of socialization" (145). According to Confucian moralistic discourse, a person's selfhood is defined in relation to one's family, clan, country and the world. One's gender identity is defined through the

"fulfillment of gender roles" (146). In other words, in Chinese society, selfhood is only the elaboration of the "rational role-self" and one can only achieve "self-fulfillment" through accomplishing his/her roles. Accordingly, female identity is equivalent to the fulfillment of the female role. This conception helps to explain why in *The Cliff in the Afternoon*, Han Guixin's mother Zhang Meifang cannot emancipate herself from patriarchal discourse although she has been physically detached from the oppression of her husband. In rejecting her role as a submissive wife, Zhang Meifang tries to attain her "self-fulfillment" through enacting her role as a mother. However, the attempt is unsuccessful. In order to revolt against the patriarchal discourse by proving her own validity and independence, she has unconsciously entrapped herself within the patriarchal discourse by performing the role of father and adopting the patriarchal strictures to control her own daughter. Lin Danya remarks that a thorough deconstruction of the patriarchal stereotyping of motherhood would be to "avoid catching the stereotype of being motherly" 染上母親的模樣 (133). Zhang Meifang, however, has troubled her own identity by "being fatherly." As Xu Kun states, "she is actually playing her role as the absent father and the male authority" [她]實際上都在串演著缺席在場的父親和男性主宰者的角色 (138).

In *The Cliff in the Afternoon*, this role bewilderment, or in a more general sense, the reenactment of patriarchal menace by the females, is transmitted across generations. When Zhang Meifang is inflicting her own painful memory upon her daughter, she is at the same time incorporating the patriarchal discourse into her mind. Like her mother, Han Guixin rebels against patriarchy by her internalized patriarchal deeds. The reason driving Han Guixin to commit murder at the age of five is not only that she has a deep sense of hatred against the male but also she is driven by a choking sense of jealousy, as the boy she has killed symbolizes the quality of wealth

and power that Han Guixin so much needs in order to assert herself. As Han Guixin herself admits:

> the one-year life in the kindergarten marks the beginning of my knowledge of the world. At the same time, it is also the germination and growth of my sense of jealousy. At the age of three or four I already experienced the taste of it, which is so strong, so irresistible. It is not only a feeling, as I understand it, but a completely concrete substance that I can always sense it rocking back and forth in my head and stomach.
>
> 一年的幼兒園生活是我認識世界的開始，也是我嫉妒心成長、發育的開始。 我在三四歲的時候就體味到了嫉妒的滋味，它是那麼強烈，那麼勢不可擋。它不是一種情緒，就我的體會，它完全是一團有形物質，我常常感到這團物質在我的腦子裡和肚子裡撞來撞去。(25)

The sense of jealousy troubling Han Guixin so much actually reflects her envy of patriarchal power and authority. She rebels by means of violence and struggles to "become somebody." After one year when people begin to forget about the murder Han Guixin has committed, she becomes discontent. From time to time, she seeks the chance to revoke the memory of the incident in public, since to her, the incident represents her "merit" of outfighting the patriarchal oppression. Although Han Guixin claims that she just doesn't want to be like her father, she is at the same time admitting that within [her] blood vessel there flows the blood of [her] father 我承認我的血管裏流著我父親的血。我是多麼的不願意像他呵 …… (24). Han Guixin reveals her "female" desire to be "unfeminine," however, as similar to her mother, she has also entrapped herself by incorporating the "masculine" discourse. She reenacts the patriarchal menace by executing a murder, which marks the beginning of her eternal psychological imprisonment. She is endowed with strength, but the fact that

her strength comes from her imitation of the patriarchal strictures ruins her chance of liberation.

The first aftermath of Han Guixin's murder is the deterioration of the mother-daughter relationship. Throughout their lives since the murder, Han Guixin and her mother are situated in a prolonged state of psychological combat, in which they make use of each other's weakness to gain the upper hand. The mother manipulates her witness of her daughter's crime to force upon her a commitment to alliance. The daughter threatens to uncover her own crime, not merely because she wants to channel her rebellious nature, but also because she wants to separate herself from the suffocating control of her mother and establishes a sense of selfhood. On two occasions when there are guests visiting her kindergarten, Han Guixin threatens to retell the story of her murder. Every time Zhang Meifang turns pale and shakes uncontrollably. Han Guixin "is happy to see her like this" 我高興看到她這種樣子 (40) – being tortured and scared. She believes that by inflicting the pain upon her mother, she will retake the control of her life. She said, "if she is scared then I will be in the upper hand. At that time I always feel that I can be in control of our fate" 她恐懼著我就主動著，我常在這時覺得我能操縱我們的命運 (40). During their continuous battle, Han Guixin sometimes complies with her mother, but most of the time she detests strongly against her suppressive protection. This abnormal mother-daughter relationship exposes the dangerous result of extreme female hatred which constitutes a vicious cycle – female resentment against patriarchy is transformed into another form of oppression by the females themselves who imitate their source of oppression, which in turn further confine them.

The second aftermath of Han Guixin's murder is her unsuccessful marriage. Coming from a poor family, Han Guixin expects marriage to redeem her from her

dubious past and poverty. The fact that she has chosen a physically weaker husband (he always looks up at her in the way like a child looking at a reliable adult (51)) reflects her desire to take the patriarchal role to control and to dominate. However, ironically, Han Guixin also expects to recover herself from poverty through this marriage. Although she has been adhering to men so much that she even commits a murder to channel her hatred, she paradoxically relies on the wealth of her husband to assert her identity. When Han Guixin is married to this physically weaker man, she is consoled that she will become a rich woman. The possession of wealth has bestowed on Han Guixin an identity in society. However, the identity acquired through possession of wealth is a distorted identity, making her all the more vulnerable to the control of the source of wealth – the patriarchal / masculine authority.

The writer has portrayed infertility as the most severe punishment for Han Guixin. This kind of punishment originates from patriarchal discourse which regards infertility as the most fundamental model of penitence for women. According to the patriarchal tradition, if a woman wants to secure a safe place in society, she has to carry out a conventional responsibility – uses her body to procreate offspring. In this sense, a female body does not belong to the woman herself but belongs to the man who controls and manipulates it. The inability of a woman to procreate means the invalidation of the quality of her body. According to Confucian concept, "there are three offences against filial piety, among those having no son is the greatest" 不孝有三, 無後爲大 [bu xiao you san, wu hou wei da]. This accusation is not pointed against men but women. To Han Guixin, having a son or not does not directly affect her physical life. However, in a society that values so much about continuing the family line, it becomes a decisive factor for the husband-and-wife relationship, and more importantly, her position in family as well as in society. Thinking that it is her

fault to be infertile since she has committed a crime against patriarchy, Han Guixin attempts to redeem her body by confessing her sin. In this sense, she has returned to become a stereotypical woman defined by patriarchy. By putting the blame of being infertile on herself, Han Guixin expresses the pathos of self-denial that is required of Chinese women for thousands of years. With this womanly virtue of self-denial, Han Guixin becomes the conformant of the invisible patriarchal demand. She comes to the narrator and then to the victim's father to confess. She states:

> I have finally found a way for my alleviation: I should face the decedent's father, Mr. Chan, telling him the whole truth that happened in the afternoon in 1958 so that he will suffer and hate me. Only through his hatred could I be really relieved and hence it might be possible for me to bear my husband a child. Tell him, I have decided to tell him."
>
> 我終于找到了使我得以解脫的出口: 我應該面對死者的父親陳先生, 告訴他 1958 年那個下午的全部真相, 告訴他讓他難受讓他恨我。只有他恨起我來我才能真正解脫, 我解脫了或許也才又可能懷上我丈夫的孩子。告訴他, 我決心要告訴他。(57)

Han Guixin is confused with her own self, or in a deeper sense, she fails to assert a sense of self. On the one hand, she aspires to transcend the stereotypical definition of femininity. She craves to become "unfeminine" by imitating masculinity. She claims that she has to uncover her crime not merely because she wants to resume fertility, but also because she wants to draw attention. "Apart from getting pregnant, I also want to draw other's attention, especially my husband's attention. This is a desire which I have already got since I was as little as studying in the kindergarten" 除了懷孕，我還要引人注目，特別引我丈夫注目，就像我從小、從上幼兒園就有的那種願望(58). On the other hand, however, she conforms to the patriarchal

demand by putting the blame of infertility on herself. As Elisabeth Croll remarks in *Feminism and Socialism in China*,

> ... the fundamental problem that confronted women [was] the removal of a whole history of cultural oppression or institutionalised and internalised subordination. It was not only the attitudes of male supremacy inherited by men which seemed to perpetuate the traditional structures, but women too colluded in their persistence by internalising and perpetuating attitudes of inferiority, self-abasement and dependence. (289)

No matter what, the confession of Han Guixin produces no resolution. Han Guixin is unable to complete her redemption. No one is taking her confession seriously (except the narrator) and she is even regarded as "having already gone mad" (62). Since she has committed the crime, there leaves no way out for her. As Xu Kun states, "history has constructed above the sky of the females a flawless net. The redemption and struggle of a female can only result in her being trapped in this net again" 歷史又在女性的天空之上架設起一面疏而不漏的天網, 女性的獲救與爭扎, 其結局不過是又一次的落網 (140). The flawless net is the net of patriarchal discourse. Since Han Guixin has chosen the role to be a violent destroyer, she can never escape from patriarchal punishment. She is punished by the "judgement of patriarchal discourse," but not by her own "conscience." At this point, the narrator criticizes her severely.

> If you think that I am going to praise your courage [of confessing your crime] you are wrong. Let's think about it in this way. If you successfully get pregnant after you marry, and that your husband hasn't lost interest in you, will you still have the desire to repent? ... Forty years ago the death of Chen Fei had soothed your jealousy; and forty years later his father has yet to bear

the responsibility of your infertility.

…… 你指望我贊頌你的勇氣麼你錯了。我們再假設一下，假設你婚後順利懷了孕生了孩子，你的丈夫也沒有對你失掉興趣，你還會有這種懺悔的欲望麼? …… 40 年前陳非的死撫平了你的嫉妒; 40 年後陳非的父親卻得承擔你的不懷孕。(58)

From a feminist point of view, both Han Guixin and her mother Zhang Meifang have to some extent revolted against the patriarchal oppression and transcended the limitation of their assigned feminine role in society by means of violence. Nevertheless, their deeds are not approved by the writer. The fact that they revolt by imitating the patriarchal oppression and violence has deprived them of the possibility for true emancipation from patriarchal discourse. They are unable to assert a sense of subjectivity since they are trapped in the bewilderment of their gender roles. They imitate masculinity but are at the same time confused with their femininity.

The effect of recent history, or more broadly of Chinese political culture on human relationships, is also one of the major concerns underlying this story, in which the writer has also viewed the negative aspects of Han Guixin and her mother Zhang Meifang as residues of society and the impossibility of their emancipation largely a result of the political dogmatism in modern China. The viciousness of Han Guixin and her mother in their trapped and privatized states of mind can be seen as the "details" of Chinese society, particularly during and after the menticide of the Cultural Revolution. Overwhelmed by political accusations and censure, the humanity of the Chinese people, as represented in the story, is greatly destroyed. The deterioration of people's conscience and morality is exposed through their ever-changing interpretations of the murder committed by Han Guixin. People do not judge the event on the ground of justice and righteousness. Instead, their judgements are

inspired by the rhetoric and events of the current political context. Despite the fact that Han Guixin's mother Zhang Meifang should hold the responsibility for the death of Chen Fei as he is her student, she is promoted to the position of vice-principal of the kindergarten one year after the event. The reason for her promotion, as Han Guixin guesses, is that during the year after Chen Fei's death, Zhang Meifang enthusiastically participates in the steel refinement of the Great Leap Forward movement. However, Zhang Meifang cannot retain her position for long. When the Cultural Revolution breaks out, Zhang Meifang and Han Guixin are banished to the village. The reason is also related to the death of Chen Fei. Some of the teachers at the kindergarten who envy Zhang Meifang's promotion argue that she should be responsible for the worsening situation between Mainland China and Indonesia. Since Chen Fei is the child of an Indonesia Chinese, his death has actually inflicted upon Chinese international reputation a fatal effect, particularly in terms of Indonesian-Chinese relationship. They even suspect that Zhang Meifang has caused the death of Chen Fei intentionally since Zhang's father-in-law is a traitor of China. In order to justify herself, Zhang Meifang has to claim that (which is not true) she has divorced her husband and cut off his thumb because he is the son of a traitor. Zhang Meifang's rebellion against her husband, which is originally an attempt to revolt against patriarchal oppression, becomes a forced national discourse representing a political manifestation. In spite of her proclamation, Zhang Meifang and Han Guixin are still banished. Yet one year later, Zhang's position is resumed. Again, it is a result of the new interpretation of Chen Fei's death. People find out that the father of Chen Fei is actually an American spy because they have searched out from his house some American military necessities such as blankets, tins and forks, regardless of the fact that these American products have actually been publicly sold in Beijing since the

1950s. Since Chen Fei is the child of a traitor, there is no need for Zhang Meifang to hold the responsibility for his death. After the Cultural Revolution, Zhang Meifang returns to the kindergarten and is soon promoted to become the Chancellor. The post-Mao period is "a period of ideological emancipation" 一個思想解放的年代 (45). In order to wreak her torture and to right her wrong, Zhang Meifang has once again chosen the topic of Chen Fei's death. She states,

> Apparently, it is the absurdity of a whole age that causes the death of a child. If there were no Great Leap Forward, there would be no large-scale steel refinement in our kindergarten. If there were no steel refinement, there would be no scrap iron lying on the lawn under the slide. If there were no scrap iron, even if a child carelessly fell from the slide, he might not have to die.
>
> 這分明是整整一個時代的荒唐導致了一個孩子的死。假如沒有大躍進，幼兒園就不會大煉鋼；假如不大煉鋼鐵，滑梯下的草坪上就不會有廢鐵堆出現; 沒有廢鐵堆，就算一個孩子不慎從滑梯上摔下來，也並不意味著非死不可。(45)

To the writer, the history of modern China is an age of absurdity. Those references in the story are clearly not arbitrary. By elaborating how the meaning of an incident can be re-appropriated again and again to curry different political and social favor, Tie Ning has demonstrated a sensitive and genuine perception of social and political reality, in which she has sarcastically exposed the absurdity of the national discourse and the impossibility of women's emancipation under the sway of it. She has made her story "into a broad and devastating condemnation of the pervasive and almost unseen ways in which China's political culture has crippled [its people as well as] its intellectuals" (Decker 296-297). Through the portrayals of the stories of Han Guixin

and her mother Zhang Meifang, the writer illustrates how political dogmatism, particularly during the Cultural Revolution, has problematized the possibility for emancipation in the lives of women who are at the same time suffering patriarchal oppression. As Rey Chow claims in her essay, "Against the Lures of Diaspora: Minority Discourse, Chinese Women, and Intellectual Hegemony," under the mainstream of masculinist and nationalist discourse, gender issues have never invited any serious or genuine concern in Chinese society. Being displaced in an age of absurdity, the writer has very sensitively depicted the disillusionment, cynicism and a heavy sense of helplessness felt within herself. Writing novels is just like writing self-criticism. Although there is a perceptive distance between the narrator and the protagonist Han Guixin, in which she does not approve of the immoral deeds of Han, the narrator has unavoidably felt a sense of identification with her confessant. When Han Guixin finally chooses to escape from her sin forever, the narrator also feels a sense of incapability and unwillingness to face the cruel reality. She states at the end of the story:

> ... I unexpectedly discover that the canvas bag containing the tapes is still lying on the seat ... . Where is Han Guixin? Why doesn't she take that away? ... On that day, neither do I take away the tapes discarded on the seat. ... It seems to me that in some sense Han Guiixin and me are associates. In facing the tapes, we both have a sense of escapism, maybe because the reality it records is too false, or because it is too real.
>
> …… 椅子上赫然地放著我那只裝有錄音帶的帆布小包 …… 韓桂心呢? 她爲什麼不把它拿走? …… 那天我也沒拿走丟在椅子上的那些錄音帶 …… 這彷彿使我和韓桂心在某種意義上成了同伙: 面對那些錄音我們有種共同的逃離感, 或者因爲它太虛假, 或者因爲它太真實。(66)

The wish of the narrator to escape emerges from a deeply personal sense of guilt and despair. Being displaced in an era when patriarchal oppression still holds a firm position in society and when people's humanity is greatly eroded by political dogmatism, the narrator (as well as the writer) feels that the cruel reality is too much to take. The story ends with the narrator's lamentation, "facing all these I sometimes feel that I have bitten more than I can chew" 面對著所有這一切有時的確會感到一陣陣的力不從心 (67).

From the two stories by Kitty Fitzgerald and Tie Ning, we can see how gender conflict is expressed through the confrontation between father and daughter and the intricate relationship between mother and daughter. The Western and Chinese writers resemble each other in the sense that they have portrayed the father figure as the symbol of patriarchal oppression and the murder committed by the daughter as a rite to destroy the source of patriarchal oppression. Moreover, both of them also see "madness" as a source of female empowerment. In *Marge* "madness" has enabled the protagonist to carry out the ritual murder. Similarly, the heroines in *The Cliff in the Afternoon* are able to rebel against the source of their oppression through their "madness" or "psychological deformity." Nevertheless, while the Western writer tends to romanticize the validity of madness in empowering female, to the Chinese writer, the liberation through madness and murder only operate on a fantasy level and the relief they provide is transitory. Along with this illusion of revenge is the reminder of loss of innocence. The violent death caused by the heroine actually signifies the ultimate loss of her humanity. By imitating the patriarchal violence to avenge for themselves, the heroines in the story have actually further entrapped themselves within the patriarchal discourse. While the story of *Marge* has

romanticized the possibility of female liberation and empowerment through madness, the story of *The Cliff in the Afternoon* becomes a text of evil. It announces the tragedy and the bankruptcy of spiritual redemption of women. After the heroine has completed the process of avenging the wrongdoer, her body and spirit, instead of being uplifted, is further deranged.

Chapter Four

Madwoman as the Murderous Wife: Elsa Lewin's *I, Anna* and Li Ang's *The Butcher's Wife*

This section explores gender conflict mainly in terms of husband and wife relationship as represented in Elsa Lewin's *I, Anna* and Li Ang's *The Butcher's Wife*, in which both authors criticize severely the prejudiced gender construction of society. In both stories, although the father figure is apparently absent, the patriarchal oppression he symbolizes is incarnated into the husband figure whose exploitative power is no less threatening. While in *Marge* and *The Cliff in the Afternoon* the source of oppression comes chiefly from the father figure whose oppression to his daughter is authorized by his biological tie to her, the patriarchal menace in *I, Anna* and *The Butcher's Wife* centralizes in the social institution of the marriage system. According to the definition given by Ember and Ember in *Cultural Anthropology*,

> Marriage is a socially approved sexual and economic union between a man and a woman which is presumed to be more or less permanent, and which subsumes reciprocal rights and obligations between spouses and between spouses and their children (159).

The Western conception of marriage system does not apply equally to Chinese culture. In Chinese society, women's submission is central to the marriage system, in which the obligation of a wife to her husband is emphasized. Through marriage, the husband gains sexual access to his wife and his patri-line gains claims to her labour and the children she would bear, while "the wife also gains privileges through marriage, such as the claim to maintenance on her husband's estate and a place of honor in ancestral rites (Ebrey 2). Nevertheless, as portrayed by the Western and

Chinese women writers, both Western and Chinese marriage systems represent a series of patriarchal failures, as the systems neither address respect nor provide protection for women, but entrap them into further victimization. The husband-wife relationship is not based on mutual respect or love, but is grounded on the wife's submission to the husband. Under the usurping marriage system which institutionalizes male dominance and female submission, the humanity and self-dignity of the wife are destroyed. Like the victimized daughter in *Marge* and in *The Cliff in the Afternoon*, the wife in these two stories suffers from mental derangement as a result of patriarchal exploitation. Similarly, they rebel against the oppressive power by committing a murder which also takes on a ritual characteristic. While *I, Anna* begins with the murdering scene, *The Butcher's Wife* ends with it. In *I, Anna*, the protagonist, Anna, kills a man she meets in the singles' party, who tries to force her to perform fellatio on him. The murder she enacts does not only represent her resentment against the humiliation inflicted upon her by this man who only knows her for a few hours, but in a deeper sense, it also reflects the outburst of her repressed detestation against her own ruthless husband who disposes of her insensitively and inconsiderately. In *The butcher's wife*, the murderer Lin Shi 林市 slaughters her husband as a result of the prolonged sexual brutalization and dehumanization he imposes on her. The murder committed by Lin Shi, to a large extent, represents a female rebellion against the most brutal and dehumanizing patriarchal practice. As portrayed by both the Western and Chinese writers, sexuality is represented as a form of male power while the woman remains the object of male proprietary sexual desire. The marriage system, as socially constructed, embodies sexuality by maintaining a division of power that institutionalizes male sexual dominance and female sexual submission. According to Catherine Mackinnon, "sexual abuses express the relations, values, feelings, norms

and behaviours of the culture's sexuality" (533). Daisy Sheung-yuen Ng also states that "sexual torture represents the most direct abuse and persecution of women by men in Chinese tradition" (183). While the wife in both Western and Chinese stories suffers from usurping marriage as well as sexual humiliation and exploitation, their madness is not only portrayed as a result of patriarchal victimization but also as a source of empowerment, and the murder they commit symbolizes their attempt to subvert the social institution of marriage system which is grounded on sexual prejudice. The Western and Chinese murderous wives hate their husbands, not as particular men, but as the whole structure of male authority and female subordination, which constitutes marriage and organizes society in their respective cultures. When they kill their husbands, they are simultaneously killing patriarchs and subverting the patriarchal law. Nevertheless, instead of romanticizing the possibility of women's empowerment and liberation through madness and murder, both writers illustrate the fact that female victimization and rebellion constitute a vicious cycle – victimization leads to female madness but their destructive rebellion will result in further confinement. In the case of *I, Anna*, the murderer is punished by internal / private conscience since she commits suicide as a result of her sense of guilt. In *The Butcher's Wife*, the law-breaker is punished by external / public trial.

Elsa Lewin's *I, Anna*

I, Anna is a novel about the psychological exploration of a divorced woman who commits murder as a result of merciless patriarchal usurpation. The principal character of the story is Anna, aged 50, being recently disposed of by her husband who divorces her for a younger woman of 32. This ruthless husband has not only hurt Anna emotionally, he even works to deprive her of the right to share the money and

property from the divorce proceedings. Anna, losing spiritual and material support, is responsible for their 19-year-old daughter with whom she shares a pokey one-bedroom flat. Overwhelmed by a choking sense of loneliness, Anna reluctantly scrimps together a few dollars for the singles' parties, or "meet markets," which "form the last hope for a woman in her position for conventional domestic security" (Munt 161). She goes home with a man called George, who forces her to perform fellatio on him. Unwilling to accept the humiliation, Anna becomes hysterical. She bites off George's penis and beats him to death with a clarinet. However, the grievance of Anna does not end with the murder as her life turns into another nightmare. Although Anna has immediately forgotten about the murder after she left the scene (a symptom of hysteria), she cannot escape from the judgement of law and her own "conscience." She is chased after by the representative of law, Inspector Bernie Bernstein, who takes personal interest in the case. He trails Anna, "subjecting her to the investigative gaze which makes explicit male desire" (Munt 165). With persistent investigation, Anna's crime is gradually uncovered by Bernie, but he is at the same time feeling more sympathy and compassion for her. In the final scene, when Anna recalls the memory of the murder that she has unconsciously repressed, she finds this confrontation with reality too much to take and shoots herself.

Apparently, *I, Anna* is not a typical murder story as it overturns a number of crime novel formulae. First of all, the reader is invited to sympathize and identify with the murderer and turn against the Inspector, who is supposed to be the symbol of law. Moreover, instead of placing emphasis on the process of investigation, the text focuses on exploring the reason or motivation of the murder, addressing a central question: What leads a woman into murdering a man? The key to this question is largely related to the psychological changes the woman experiences after a series of

patriarchal failures that traumatize her life. As implied by the title, the text is overloaded with rich psychoanalytic signifiers (the writer is herself a psychologist, which may explain the dense texturing of psychoanalytic symbols, themes and signifiers in the story). As remarked by Sally R. Munt, "Anna herself is a modern remodelling of the case which was the starting point of psychoanalysis as the 'talking cure' – Josef Breuer's 'Anna O.,' as published in his and Freud's *Studies on Hysteria*" (161). Anna O and the protagonist of *I, Anna* resemble each other in a number of ways: both employ the name of "Anna"; both suffer from domestic demands in a monotonous family life, resulting in their isolation and alienation from society; both express a split personality, a split between consciousness and the unconscious, where the conscious one remains normal, the unconscious (hallucinatory) side displays self-abhorrence and violence against the others; both exhibit hysterical symptoms such as disturbances of vision or balance, persistent anxiety interfering with eating and gradually led to intense feelings of nausea.[1] Bearing so many similarities, it is hard not to regard Elsa Lewin's Anna as the remodelling of Breuer's Anna O. Nevertheless, while Breuer treats the illness of Anna O. merely in terms of medical and psychoanalytical perspectives, Elsa Lewin goes further to foreground the gender conflict in causing Anna's insanity. She has replaced the name of Anna O with Anna I. As suggested by Munt, "the symbolism of that 'O' is profoundly feminine – the Woman, who is nothing, the lack, the hole, permanently opened" (161). The story of "Anna O.," as recorded by Breuer and Freud, is merely treated as one of the case studies of hysteria, where the language and principles being employed to treat and to narrate her case are exclusively representing male-defined values and standards. "'Anna O.', then, is a densely important sign of a woman constructed by a masculine discourse" (Munt 162). By replacing the "O" with "I," Elsa Lewin has uncovered the

hidden female subject. For Lewin, the female subject, the agent of the murderous act, needed to be articulated. She uses the pronoun "I" as the title of her story in an attempt to replace the female self which is defined by patriarchal discourse for a self-defined one which struggles for individuation and autonomy. The assertiveness of "I" "indicates a resolve, a taking of a stand, an act of self-definition" (Munt 162). Nevertheless, the split positioning of "I" and "Anna" of the title also suggests the impossibility of a unified female subject – in the story the heroine Anna suffers from a split of personalities, of which one is mentally normal and the other insane. On the one hand, the writer portrays the madness of Anna and the murder she commits as the enactment of a potentially self-defined female liberation. On the other, she also addresses the limitation of female emancipation through madness and murder. The fact that Anna is tortured by the prolonged legal investigation after the murder and that she commits suicide at the end of the novel reflect the writer's pessimistic view on the possibility of female liberation through violence.

The novel *I, Anna* has 40 chapters, in which there are two prologues spoken by Anna herself. Breuer's Anna O. is given no voice. Her story is totally narrated by patriarchal discourse, and the representation of her life is only a construction by patriarchy. Under Elsa Lewin, Anna is endowed with the right of speech. She is given the opportunity to narrate her torture, her pain and her reasons for violent rebellion, through which the righteousness of the murder she enacts is justified.

From the very beginning of Anna's self-narration in Prologue Two, she has already been in the stage of melancholy, loneliness, isolation and desperation. She has lost all hopes of life and is at the point of spiritual collapse.

> It was drizzling slightly when I left the apartment, so I took my raincoat and umbrella. When I got to the bridge, it was raining so hard I couldn't see.

> The car kept skidding on the slippery grids. I fantasized that a huge truck lost control and smashed into me, and I hit my head on the windshield and my car skidded off the bridge into the river and I was killed. But I knew it wouldn't happen. I wasn't lucky (7).

The breakdown of Anna is largely a result of her unsuccessful marriage. "For twenty-eight years [she] had depended on Simon [her ex-husband] to tell [her] how [she] looks. Now [she doesn't] know" (9). With the loss of her husband, Anna has lost the objective of her life and the confidence in her own validity. Throughout her life, she has never been able to assert her own identity. She defines herself only in terms of her role as a wife, and it is her husband who constructs her selfhood. To her, losing her husband means the loss of support in life, and more importantly, the loss of self-identity. She becomes lonely, confused and fragmented. In a desperate attempt to kill her choking sense of loneliness and to unlock her isolation, Anna is unwilling and yet forces herself to join the singles' parties, where she meets a man and later kills him, against whom she has directed all her repressed anger and despair. On a crude level, the murder she commits is a result of sexual humiliation. In the prologue, the narrative points to the sexual exploitation which provokes (and legitimates) revenge. The man Anna meets at the singles' party is a divorced man who lives with his son in a small apartment. While Anna goes to the party in a desperate attempt to regain a little sense of security through companionship, George goes there to hunt for sexual prey. He picks Anna home, but "he wasn't interested in [her]. It was his ego that was involved" (28). Barely speaking, he is only a selfish, egoistic and even brutal predator of sexuality. The most extreme example of his brutality is the oral rape he forces upon Anna. The sexuality between George and Anna is not based on mutual satisfaction, but on the male's exploitation of the female, which in essence is a kind of

forced prostitution. Their sex act is de-romanticized and de-eroticized decidedly by the brutality of the description.

> He lifted my head and put it on his thigh, near his penis. The hair around it was sticky. I could smell the stale semen. I could smell old juices that were festering there. The stink was overpowering. I was choking. I opened my mouth to breathe.
>
> "I want you to eat me," he said.
>
> "No." I shuddered.
>
> "I like it," he said petulantly.
>
> I moved to get up. He twisted my head and shoved his penis into my mouth. I struggled, gagging. He held my head, pressing it down hard. The sticky hair filled my nose.
>
> "Such, suck ..." he crooned.
>
> I gagged, trying to breathe, trying to break loose, trying to scream, feeling the penis harden as if to burst, feeling the throb, the stench, the horror. And then a gooey mucus filled my mouth, and still he held my head down in the slime and he breathed,
>
> "That's good, that's good; you're really eating me ..."
>
> Desperate, enraged, I clenched my teeth through the filth into the flesh in my mouth and bit. I bit with all my strength (30).

Anna is unwilling to brook the humiliation forced upon her. Facing this self-centered, sexually dominant scoundrel, Anna feels a vomiting sense of resentment. She is not going to accept the dehumanization this time. She has to fight back. At the critical moment, Anna undergoes metamorphosis from sanity to complete hysteria, and from a docile woman to an angry avenger. She slaughters the man. The entire procedure

of the murder is performed amid George's fiercest screams, but what we witness is the desperate struggle of a poor woman. Although George is apparently the victim, his ruthlessness and egocentrism positions Anna's outrageous act as righteous and the reader is prepared to be morally complicit with her. The murder executed by Anna bears a number of significance. When Anna closes her mouth and bites, she has symbolically closed the mouth of "Anna O." (Munt 163). The hollowness and emptiness as represented by the letter "O" (noticing that the letter "O" projects the shape of a mouth) is evacuated and her vulnerability to patriarchal exploitation is temporarily terminated. Moreover, Anna has performed the ritual of castration through the murder. According to Freud, the castration complex resolves the Oedipal complex by forcing the children to repress their previously incestuous interest in the parent of the opposite sex, instead identifying with the same-sex parent, as part of the socializing process. In this story, Anna is not the typical "castrator" as Freudian theory would assume. Her revenge by castration is not to be interpreted as a woman's phallic longing or "penis-envy." In fact, she castrates and murders George in an (unconscious) attempt to relinquish the patriarchal menace and brutality he represents. George's death is not caused by the woman's "penis-envy." He is instead a patriarchal scoundrel dispatched by a feminist avenger who has been tortured not only by his sexual exploitation but also her ex-husband's spiritual victimization. This reading is supported in the text by the use of a symbol "which Freud himself suggested stands in for the male organ – an umbrella" (Munt 163). In "Lecture 10: Symbolism in Dreams," Freud suggests several symbolic substitutes for male genitals as represented in dreams.

> The male genitals, then, are represented in dreams in a number of ways that must be called symbolic ... the male organ, finds symbolic substitutes in the

> first instance in things that resemble it in shape – things, accordingly, that are long and up-standing, such as sticks, umbrellas, posts, trees and so on; further, in objects which share with the thing they represent the characteristic of penetrating into the body and injuring – thus, sharp weapons of every kind, knives, daggers, spears, sabres, but also fire-arms, rifles, pistols and revolvers (particularly suitable owing to their shape (154).[2]

The umbrella Anna carries is an important symbol in the story, and its meaning is rather multi-layered. "It [is] a cheap, clear yellow plastic. The shaft, right below the handle, [is] split" and Anna has to "hold it by the mental, past the split, instead of by the handle, or it wobbled and flopped over" (6-7). Anna carries around a broken umbrella, which has almost lost its original function of protecting her from the rain. In a symbolic sense, if the umbrella can be interpreted as the substitute of a phallus, then it is a broken phallus – a castrated one. It has not only lost the masculine power it is supposed to embody, but more importantly, it symbolizes the failure of a male, and in Anna's case, a husband to perform his role and obligation – to be responsible, devoted and protective to his family. Since Anna is divorced, she can no longer rely on her husband who has once cared, loved and protected her. The support of her husband is now broken, just like the broken umbrella which can no longer protect her from the falling rain. This may well explain why Anna has claimed in her narration several times that "I can't afford to keep losing umbrella" (31, 297). In addition, if the umbrella signifies the accumulation of Anna's bitter experiences of losing her husband's love and support, the fact that she has left the umbrella behind after she has committed the murder can be read as symbolizing her temporary relief from her pain. Returning to the question of why Anna would murder a man she has only known for a few hours, the answer is not simply that she is revolting against the sexual exploitation

the man imposed on her. In a deeper sense, it also represents the outburst of her outrageous anger against her ex-husband who disposes of her cruelly. When Anna is beating George to death, she claims: "Rage took hold of me. Something deep inside me, something buried that burst loose. Exploded"(30). Being maltreated by another man, Anna's repressed hatred against her ex-husband, Simon, is triggered off. At the crucial moment, her murderous instinct takes on a life of its own in order to avenge herself. She explodes into violent hysterics and hallucinates. To Anna, George is no longer a stranger she meets in the singles' party, but a male who has incarnated all patriarchal menace, including the menace her ex-husband inflicts upon her. The figure of George at the moment seems to bring back the painful memory that has been suppressed. Anna says, "[George]'s face was unrecognizable. Formless, bleeding pulp. It wasn't a recognizable face. It could have been anybody's. It could have been Simon's. I couldn't see anything else" (31). Anna's murder has taken on ritual characteristics. She has not only slaughtered a man who has sexually abused her, but also the patriarchal menace (represented by her ex-husband) which has victimized her. After the murder, Anna feels a sense of relief and empowerment. "She felt unaccountably exhilarated, filled with energy" (71).

> I didn't feel anything at first. Then, slowly, I began to feel warm. Flushed. Feverish. My heart began to beat fast. I felt something more than joy. I felt release. Ecstasy. Exultation. I felt revenge.
>
> I was happy.
>
> "I hate you, Simon," I said. I said it again. "I hate you. I hate you, Simon" … .
>
> … . I was feeling gay, light-headed. Weightless. …
>
> The rain had stopped. The air smelled washed and clean. I felt nice.

Really good. I didn't know why I was crying (31).

The reason at the back that leads Anna into murdering a man is her unsuccessful marriage. Indeed, the story of Anna is itself a criticism of the gender-prejudiced social institution like marriage. Chesler, in "Patient and Patriarch: Women in the Psychotherapeutic Relationship," remarks that psychotherapy reinforces the rigidity of sex roles as seen in social institutions like marriage. Both psychotherapy and marriage, she writes,

> are based on a woman's helplessness and dependency on a stronger male authority figure; both may, in fact, be viewed as reenactments of a little girl's relation to her father in a patriarchal society; both control and oppress women similarly – yet, at the same time, are the two safest havens for women in a society that offers them no others (260).

Anna's husband Simon is the enactor of this institutionalized oppression. Simon is once a responsible and caring husband. However, when Anna gets older and can no longer maintain her youth and beauty, his love for her fades. He ruthlessly divorces her for another younger woman and has made sure he receives the majority of the money and property from the divorce proceedings. According to Germaine Greer in *The Whole Woman*, man is not capable of nurturing love:

> Each man kills the things he loves, or so a man once wrote. God forbid that I, a woman, should suggest that the love of men is essentially proprietary or predatory, or cruel or consuming, or destructive or degrading, but it is strange that when all love is expressed in masculinist culture by fucking, no word should have more destructiveness packed into its meaning than "fuck" (244).

Although Simon has not sexually abused Anna, the spiritual damage he brings her is

all the more disastrous. Once his love for her is no longer valid, he becomes very mean. He is "so critical and cruel and impatient, always sarcastic, never wanting [Anna's] opinion, belittling her, putting her down, cataloging her faults, destroying her self-confidence so she couldn't even fight back" (85-86). The marriage contract that is supposed to grant "a socially approved sexual and economic union between a man and a woman, subsuming reciprocal rights and obligations permanently" can turn out to be a useless paper. In reality, women have access to money and social status primarily through men. Before the divorce, Anna has once believed that the marriage can protect her from the harshness of the world, and she identifies herself with the role that is confined to domesticity. However, the shelter that patriarchy provides can turn out to be atrocious. Anna's life is turned into a nightmarish by her inhumane husband. Finding that marriage is no longer a reliable shelter for her, Anna loses all hope in life. "[she is] never happy. What [she feels] sporadically is rage and fear and helplessness. Total despair ..." (157). After the divorce, Anna's female self begins to split into two versions: while one remains imprisoned in the norms, the other, the rebellious self which desires to violate, rebel and to avenge, gradually germinates and tends to take over her normal self. The meeting of George becomes a catalyst of the final explosion of her ferocious demonic self. Through the murder, she has channelled her anger. She has disrupted the patriarchal sexual brutality. More importantly, she has detached herself from the haunting image of her ex-husband to whom she has been attached for so many years. At the moment of lunacy, she is vicious and destructive, able to escape from surveillance. After the ritual murder, she enjoys a temporary relief and refreshment. When she is leaving the murder spot, she feels so enlivened.

She felt unvanquished by the weather. The weather so often determined

> her mood. The weather and Emily and Simon and before that, her father ... things over which she had no control. She had always tried to please them, to do what was suitable. Propitiating the gods. ... Today she felt free of all of them. As though, for the first time, she controlled her own destiny. ... She walked past the doorman in the lobby with her new, confident step, straight to the elevator (75).

When Anna gets up the next morning, "she had felt free of Simon. For the first time, for a brief moment, she had felt as if he didn't exist anymore ..." (94). After the murder, Anna has tasted a glimpse of empowerment, independence and even individuality. As a murderer, she is able to attain the sense of selfhood – an entity that can make her own choice and assign her own destiny. The violent act, however, is only a kind of temporary answer to her oppression. Her relief through madness and murder is only tenuous. Her violent act provides no liberation, but instead intensifies the horror of her life. On the one hand, being the offender of the legal system, Anna is pursued by the investigator. Her trajectory descends as she is transformed from a feminist avenger into a "lamster." On the other, her split of personality further intensifies. While this murderous woman can think, reason, and act like other people, the appearance of normality no longer signifies sanity. Despite the temporal empowerment Anna gains after the murder, her ego becomes all the more fragile. Her violent experience of confronting patriarchy has largely threatened the unity of her personality, resulting in her further separation, alienation and repression. She goes through a psychic process in her madness – from violence, to silence, to hallucination, and finally to estrangement and suicidal despair. Although Anna seems to have forgotten about the murder,[3] the reminiscence of the memory consistently glides in and out of her consciousness to haunt her as well as confronting

her "conscience," which ultimately causes her tragic suicidal death.

The world that Anna is living in, as portrayed in the novel, is a battlefield. As observed by Sally R. Munt, "one of the most disturbing aspects of this novel is the way all the characters are at war with each other" (161). The battlegrounds fall into two types: relations between husbands and wives, and relations between parents and children. Not only that the relationship between Anna and Simon is a trash, the other husband-wife relationships, as represented in the story, are also disastrous. Inspector Bernie Bernstein, who takes charge of Anna's case, is himself a divorced man as he is unable to maintain an intimate and resourceful relationship with his wife Linda. Bernie is a paradoxical man. Being a Jew, he has paid extraordinary effort to eliminate his ethnic disadvantage and ascertain a position in society. He struggles hard to assert his masculine authority by idealizing, idolizing and imitating his own father. As another policeman in the story observes: "He don't have a mother. Never did. He only had the Ten Commandments" (241). His psychic incarnation of the Law-of-the-Father harms the women around him despite his best efforts to be consciously kind (Munt 241). He is too egoistic. When Linda decides to divorce him, he resolves by putting the blame on Linda: "He was an attractive man, he knew that. If Linda didn't want him, that was her loss. He was a man with love to give" (125). To Bernie, love is not something to be mutually shared, but to be granted by the masculine authority. This explains why Linda cries out: "there's nothing between us anymore, Bernie. You have this exaggerated obsessional idea of loyalty, of right and wrong. It's 'wrong' for a man to leave his wife and child. It has nothing to do with love" (187). Bernie's belief in absolute masculine authority has deprived him of any real possibility to develop a genuine and intricate relationship with any women. Through the examples of Simon and Bernie, the writer has exemplified how the

egocentrism of men and the authoritativeness of masculinity can victimize husband and wife relationship.

Another battle undergoing in the novel is the conflict between parents and children, which can best be exemplified by the mother-daughter relationship between Anna and her daughter. "The psychic conflict between Anna and her daughter Emily concerns the daughter's fight for independence, and her anger with Anna for being a 'failed' mother (Munt 161). According to Silverstein and Perlick, mothers appear to act as role models of adult femininity. To many daughters, mothers represent the model of what it is to be an adult woman. Their experiences of their mothers' lives may lay down a psychological template that collars their expectations regarding their own adult lives (104). To Emily, Anna is a failed mother who is not to be imitated. That she wants to fight for independence is largely because Anna fails to provide her with legacy of dignity and self. Recalling Chesler's conception on mother-daughter relationship, "it is true that women are more cooperative and sympathetic to each other. ... However, such cooperation is based on unindivduated uniformity, discontent, and powerlessness" (1997: 58). As a daughter, Emily's sense of "cooperation" with Anna is destroyed since she is greatly disappointed in seeing the failure of her as a wife and as a mother. Even Anna herself can detect the antagonism of her daughter: "I guess she doesn't like me. She used to. She blames me" (7). Facing this trauma, Anna responds by spiraling self-denial and guilt, which makes Emily detests her even more. As stated by Munt, "the rawness of these fights resounds with the gender oppression which situates women as masochistic mothers" (161).

Being placed in a society where husband-wife and parent-children relationships are all traumatized by gender conflict and oppression, Anna cannot help but falls into further desperation and alienation. As one of the policemen in the novel points out,

the political and social context of the conventional society is damaging, in which people's conscience and morality are greatly eroded.

> "Damnedest thing," Feeley said. "Years ago you could get a witness to a crime. Ten people would say they saw something or heard something. Nowadays nobody wants to get involved. Nobody cares. Nobody even cares for their own. People married thirty years splitting up, kids living five years together refusing to make a commitment, afraid of responsibility, not wanting kids." (174)

Although Anna seems to ascertain a sense of empowerment after she has enacted the murder, she is nonetheless pulled into further fragmentation. Emily's antagonism against her trashes her heart. The memory of her crime which slides in and out of her consciousness haunts her conscience tremendously. As a result, her personality enters into an irrevocable split. In Chapter 32, there is an interior monologue in which Anna talks to herself about the her confusion between "rationality" and "emotion," notifying her conscious awareness of a disjunction between "head" and "feeling" (243-250). Anna's identity becomes bewildering, torn between law and desire, reason and emotion. Amidst her torture and pain, the appearance of Bernie in her life seems to have retrieved her from her morbid withdrawal from society as well as the courage to lead her life onwards. Nevertheless, the comfort and nurture that Bernie has brought her are faked and temporary. Although Bernie has taken a personal interest in Anna's case and that he seems to pity her, he does not actually regard Anna as an individual with self-identity. He unconsciously treats her as the substitute of Linda, the wife he has lost. He pities Anna and assumes that she needs to be protected only because he has an overwhelming sense of masculine righteousness. In reality, he cannot understand Anna's truest self. Apparently, he

should not be regarded as Anna's saviour. In the final scene, when Anna recalls all the painful memory she has so forcefully but unconsciously repressed, she shoots herself.

Anna's life story represents the metamorphosis of a woman in a merciless and indifferent but oppressive patriarchal world – the metamorphosis from youthful beauty to malevolent hysterics, in which her husband is the prime culprit or ringleader of her degradation. The rebellion Anna has once upstaged only drives her into even more tragic punishment. It is true that Anna has once triumphed over the masculine exploitation, but her victory is only a hollow gesture. By putting Anna into a tragic death at the end, the novel seems to suggest that the constraints of gender – that women suffer at the hands of men – are not easy to change.

Li Ang's *The Butcher's Wife*

This section explore women's problem in traditional Chinese society chiefly in terms of husband-wife relationship as represented in Li Ang's *Shafu* 殺夫 [The butcher wife]. In modern China, Li Ang is probably the most famous as well as the most controversial woman writer who manifests the issue of sexuality in gender politics in an extraordinary conspicuous and explicit way. Being a writer, Li Ang has earned both fame and notoriety. She is praised for her artistic mastery and incisive perspective on gender issues, but is at the same time condemned for her explicitness about the portrayal of sexuality. Her best-known novel, *The Butcher's Wife*, which wins the first prize in the annual fiction contest of the *United Daily News* [Lianhe bao 聯合報], though having won her international reputation, has also met with serious criticisms.[4] One of the criticisms, for instance, is that the explicitness of the novel's sexual brutality might traumatize young girls and harm social morality (Ng 177).

However, some more serious critics have assured the credits of the work both in terms of its artistry as well as its insightful illumination on Chinese gender issues. Zheng Shusen 鄭樹森, for instance, remarks that the representation of female problems, such as the process of how a woman is gradually dehumanized and forced into madness in the novel, is a breakthrough merit (Li 1999: iii). In the "Author's Preface" to the English translation of *The Butcher's Wife*, Li Ang expresses her objectives in the novel:

> I cannot deny that I approached the writing of *The Butcher's Wife* with a number of feminist ideals, wanting to show the tragic fate that awaited the economically dependent Taiwanese women living under the rules of traditional Chinese society. But as I wrote, I found myself becoming more and more concerned with larger issues of humanity, such as hunger, death, sex. What I want to emphasize here is the ultimate concern of a piece of "feminist literature" is, after all, human nature (Author's Preface).

Li Ang's investigation of the larger scope of humanity issues begins with her exploration of the feminist issues. In *The Butcher's Wife*, she focuses on the exploration of women's problem and male-female conflict in traditional Chinese society. The novel is set in Lucheng 鹿城, a small town in Taiwan which is old-fashioned, superstitious and closely attached to conservative patriarchal ethical codes. Through the narration of a story about a woman who is driven mad by the unbearable sexual brutalization and dehumanization imposed on her by her husband, and who avenges by slaughtering him, the novel in effect attests to the inhuman and oppressive nature of patriarchy in Chinese society.

The story of *The Butcher's Wife* dramatizes a Chinese wife's hysterical violence against her husband. The causal agent of her madness and destructive revenge is the

violent nature of sex as incarnated in the figure of a brutal husband. The husband and wife relationship, as represented in the novel, is a relationship between the sadistic exploiter and the exploited. The sadist is Chen Jiangshui, a butcher; and the victim is Lin Shi, a poor and timid village girl. The novel begins with a report of an enacted murder: Chen Jiangshui is murdered by his wife, Chen Lin Shi. The same question that has been asked in our discussion of *I, Anna* needed to be re-addressed – What leads a woman into murdering a man? Or, what leads a wife into murdering her own husband? In order to answer this question, we have to look into the cultural and ideological milieu that this female murderer is situated and the psychological transformation she has undergone within this milieu.

The murderer and the law breaker in the story, Lin Shi originally comes from a economically sufficient family. "Lin Shi's grandfather had been a man of modest means in Lucheng" (5). However, when the family declines, Lin Shi and her mother, being the females, become the first sufferers. After the death of Lin Shi's father, they are deprived of the right to live in the family since women have no right to inherit property, while the possibility of the mother's remarriage is also manipulated as an excuse for the other family members to expel them. As a result, Lin Shi's family line is terminated and they are dispatched from the tile-roofed house that is once their sole possession. They become wanderers and enter upon a life of utmost tragedy. During the day, they roam the streets and forage for scraps; at night they sneak to the Lin Clan Ancestral Hall for shelter. Although life has already been so unbearable, Lin Shi and her mother have not been let go of even more tragic sufferings. Haunted by the specter of starvation, Lin Shi's mother sells her body to a soldier in exchange for merely two rice balls. Being the witness of the scene, the horror of starvation and the resentment against male sexual brutality are deeply stamped within the little heart

of Lin Shi, who is still a small girl at that time. After the adulterous act has been discovered, Lin Shi's mother is tied on the pillar of the ancestral hall. Thereafter, she disappears from the scene. Lin Shi is then taken back to her uncle's house, where life is no better. When Lin Shi reaches the age of puberty, she is traded in marriage to a butcher, Chen Jiangshui. Instead of saving her from poverty and distress, the marriage drives Lin Shi into further victimization. Chen Jiangshui is a misogynist and has sexual perversion. He takes sex as a way to exercise his domination over the woman and obtains sadistic pleasure through torturing her and hearing her painful scream. Facing his menacing dehumanization, Lin Shi, who is economically dependence and has a neurotic fear of starvation, is forced to submit to his exploitation in exchange for food. The husband-wife relationship becomes a forced prostitution. Amidst her suffering under her tyrannous husband, Lin Shi's disaster is further intensified by the women community surrounding her which has internalized the patriarchal strictures and is the loyal conformer of patriarchal demand. Having an adulterous mother, Lin Shi is ostracized by the people in the village, as represented by Auntie Ah-Wang and other women. They gossip about the story of Lin Shi's mother and condemn her for adultery. They even scandalize Lin Shi's sexual life by taking her painful scream as expression of sexual pleasure. Not knowing the truth, they accuse Lin Shi of being uninhibited in sexuality. As a result, Lin Shi is repelled from the social circle which in effect accelerates her mental breakdown. Before she suffers from a thorough mental breakdown, Lin Shi is inflicted on a final blow when Chen Jiangshui forces her to go the slaughterhouse and watches him slaughtering the pigs. After the threatening experience, Lin Shi begins to have horrible hallucinations: she fantasizes that the face of her husband melts together with the slaughtered pig. One night, when Chen Jiangshui comes home with a butcher knife and once again fiercely

"rapes" her, Lin Shi becomes totally hysterical. She picks up Chen Jiangshui's knife and disfigures his body, hallucinating that she is slaughtering the pig at the slaughterhouse. Presuming Lin Shi kills her husband out of extra-marital affair, the authorities execute her.

Tracing the life story of Lin Shi, we can see that there are indeed numerous reasons driving her into murdering her own husband. On a crude level, Lin Shi is driven mad by her husband's sexual brutalization, but in a deeper sense, her madness as well as her destructive revenge is also largely related to the usurping patriarchal culture that victimizes her both spiritually and economically, depriving her of any decent identity or economic security. What's more, the women community which should originally be Lin Shi's source of companionship and identification, turns out to be the enforcer of patriarchal oppression, making her all the more desperate. As the alienation and brutalization are too much to take, Lin Shi has no choice but to rebel.

Being a woman in the patriarchal society, Lin Shi's tragic fate is predestined as she deserves neither human dignity nor economic security. Confucian tradition has long viewed women as second-class citizens. In *The Analects of Confucius*, Confucius compares women to inferior (low-class and mean) persons: "Only women and inferior people are hard to please." In this view, women are the moral and intellectual inferiors of men and require guidance, care, and control. Their chastity is their single most important aspect. This ethical system demands submission and self-sacrifice from women and restricts their activity to the family. After the death of Lin Shi's father, Lin's mother is still required to "protect" her chastity, even at the price of death. This strict ethical demand on women is manifested through the mouth of Auntie Ah-Wang: "when someone tried to assassinate my character [my chastity], I knew that the only way to prove my virtue was in death" (103). Ironically, Lin Shi's

mother does not gain any "protection" from the society that makes the request. Before she has ever made any attempt to re-marry, she has already been discarded from the family. She and Lin Shi become beggars but no one cares about it. However, when she is later found out to have committed adultery, the attention on her from society is re-aroused. This return of attention, nevertheless, is not out of any attempt to help her, but to judge her, make her guilty and sentence her to a tragic death. The ethnical code in society, as it is elaborated in the case of Lin Shi's mother, only operates to victimize women rather than protecting them. Like her mother, Li Shi is also a victim of the ethical double-standard of society. While women are demanded to yield their bodies up as a sexual tool for men's use, they are at the same time required to restrict themselves in terms of sexuality. A woman has to demonstrate her virtue and chastity by a self-censorship in sexual activity. She should not regard sexual intercourse as an enjoyment but a duty to serve her husband and to procreate. Under this ethical standard, there is no surprise why when the people in Lucheng overhear Lin Shi's painful moaning and take it as her incontinent cries of orgasmic ecstasy, they blame her for being excessive in sexuality: "... . It's all that greedy Lin Shi's doing. She can't get enough. She wants it day and night. I don't know how anyone can be so shameless! Who ever heard of anyone doing things like that in broad daylight?" (102). Even after Lin Shi has lowered her voice, they still traduce her: "She even stopped moaning toward the end. I wonder if that means that Big-Butcher Chen couldn't control her any longer. Heh-heh, I even heard him accuse her once of taking a lover!" (141). Being confined and exploited within the patriarchal ethnical system, both Lin Shi and her mother are deprived of their dignity and humanity.

The patriarchal society also deprives women of any economic security.

According to Sheung-Yuen Daisy Ng, "Li Ang underpins the economic nature of women's oppression in a patriarchal culture by closely relating hunger to sex in *The Butcher's Wife*" (188). In the novel, the violent nature of sex and its relationship to female's economic impotence is the overarching motif. Being economically dependent, women are vulnerable to men's sexual exploitation. The Chinese feudal system forces economic dependency upon women by disallowing them to be the coparceners in family or lineage property. In *Li ji* 禮記 [The book of rites], it states that there is the principle of "san cong" 三從 [Threefold obediences] to be observed by a woman, which allows her no path of self-reliance. When yet unmarried she follows her father; after marriage she follows her husband; after his death she follows her son. Here, the word "follow" suggests that a woman's living solely relies on the males and she has no right to inherit property in the family line, but is herself treated as property, vulnerable to be traded as commodities on the conjugal market. In other words, the organization of the Chinese society excludes women from having legal rights, rights within the family, property ownership, the freedom to dispose of their own property or persons, and even denies them of their own names. Lin Shi and her mother are the victims under such patriarchal usurpation. Being the females in the family, they have no claims on the properties of the family and are easily expelled from the family after the death of Lin Shi's father. The fact that both Lin Shi and her mother are haunted by the nightmare of starvation throughout their lives proves that one of the most brutal patriarchal menaces is the deprivation of women's economic security. The explicitly beastial description of the sex scene between Lin Shi's mother and the soldier exposes how the terror of hunger can disrupt one's humanity and morality:

> " … . In the bright moonlight, Lin Shi saw the soldier. He was naked from

> the waist down, ... Pinned beneath him was her mother, whose face, whose haggard face, was flushed bright red and all aglow with a greed light.
>
> She was chewing on one rice ball and clutching another in her hand. Low moaning sounds escaped from her mouth, which was stuffed with food. Half-eaten grains of white rice, mixed with saliva, dribbled down the side of her face, onto her neck, and down her shirtfront" (7).

The juxtaposition of sexuality and hunger in this scene discloses the grim fact of women's economic impotence. The flushing and moaning of Lin's mother signify neither canal desire nor sexual voracity, but her primordial urge to survive. Her obsessive fear of hunger makes her blind to morality. By situating the occurrence of the "adultery" in the Lin Clan Ancestral Hall, Li Ang has severely criticized the failure of patriarchy failure to provide protection for women. In China, the clan ancestral hall is an emblem of the Chinese traditional architecture, symbolizing holiness and solemnity, where the clansmen offer sacrifices, worship their ancestors and pray for good fortune. However, the Lin Clan Ancestral Hall provides no shelter to Lin Shi and her mother as they are females. To them, it is only a place of battlefield where they struggle desperately to survive. The commitment of "adultery" by Lin Shi's mother in the hall, to some extent, symbolizes the destruction of the decency that the hall represents. Instead of a sacred place, the hall is a place of victimization, within which Lin Shi and her mother are confined and dehumanized. The fact that Lin Shi's mother is tied to the ancestral-hall pillar after the discovery of her "adultery" further illuminates the oppressive nature of patriarchy as symbolized in the Chinese architecture.

The deficiency of Lin Shi's mother in society is transmittable across generation as she can leave nothing to her daughter but her own humiliation. Lin Shi helplessly

inherits the "curse" on women that passes from her mother to her. The common Chinese proverb that Auntie Ah-Wang so frequently quotes – No good bamboo shoot can come from a bad bamboo (104) – ironically addresses the predestination of Lin Shi's tragic fate. Neither Lin Shi nor her mother is a good bamboo – they are inferior and impotent in every aspect under the patriarchal culture. Lin Shi's economic powerlessness drives her into a trading marriage. Soon after she reaches puberty, her uncles trades her off to the butcher Chen Jiangshui in exchange for his constant provision of meat. The trading of women in marriage is an acceptable norm in society. Instead of pitying her for being sold as commodity, the other people in the village all remark "enviously" that Lin Shi "was able to exchange a body with no more than a few ounces of meat for pork by the pound" (12). While Lin Shi's marriage is part of the flesh trade, the approval of it by society signifies a general social illness in objectifying women as men's property. Since Lin Shi marries Chen Jiangshui, she enters into another form of flesh trade. Chen Jiangshui is a sadistic sexual predator who enjoys sexual pleasure by squeezing painful screams from his sexual prey. Facing the sexual perversion of Chen Jiangshui, Lin Shi is helpless. Resembling her mother, Lin Shi has an obsession of the nightmare of starvation. Her instinctive need for food and survival makes her blind to morality and drives her into submissive conformity to Chen Jiangshui's sexual abuse. Every time when Chen intends to "rape" Lin Shi, he brings her food. Overwhelmed by her instinctive terror of hunger, Lin endures the sexual torture until she can enjoy the food lavishly. The exchange of food and perverse sexual pleasure between Lin Shi and Chen Jiangshui transforms the husband-wife relationship into a kind of prostitution. Although Lin Shi is the legal wife of Chen Jiangshui, she has to sell her body in exchange for food. Whenever Chen cannot satisfy with Lin's performance, that is, if she does not scream loud

enough (the scream indicates her pain and torture), he keeps her starve. Li Ang even goes further to compare the sexual violence of Chen Jiangshui to his slaughtering of pigs. In Chapter 9, there is a scene where Chen Jiangshu slaughters a pregnant sow. His way of killing the sow reminds the reader of the same way he abuses Lin Shi's body. His perverse demand that woman should "scream her head off the whole time" just like "a big being slaughtered" (11) is reminiscent of the squealing of pigs in the face of death. The other villagers call him "Pig-Butcher Chen," partly because he is skillful in butchering pigs, but also because he handles his woman like a pig (14). The following paragraph vividly represents the association between Chen's slaughtering of the pigs and his sexual domination of Lin Shi:

> This was Chen Jiangshui's moment. As the knife was withdrawn and the blood spurted forth, he was infused with an incomparable sense of satisfaction. It was as though the hot stream coursing through his body was converted into a thick, sticky white fluid spurting into the shadowy depths of a woman at the climax of a series of high-speed thrusts. To Chen Jiangshui, the spurting of blood and the ejaculation of semen had the same orgasmic effect (75).

By juxtaposing Chen Jiangshui's slaughter of pig with his sexual sadism, Li Ang denounces the dehumanization of women to mere sexual objects by patriarchy. As Joyce Liu points out, "in *Shafu*, pig-butchery and sexual intercourse are linked by recurring overlapping metaphors" (70).

Chen Jiangshui is able to dominate Lin Shi and can victimize her because he has complete economic control over her. In exposing this fact, Li Ang has made a sarcastic parody of the Confucian aphorism of "shi se xing ye" 食色性也 [food and sex are human wants]. In *The Butcher's Wife*, sex is no longer simply a human want

but can be "a weapon of terror because sexuality is a form of power"(Ng 184). As Catherine A. Mackinnon points out, "sexuality is gendered as gender is sexualized" (635). Gender, as socially constructed, embodies sexuality by maintaining a division of power that institutionalizes male sexual dominance and female sexual submission (Ng 184). To Chen Jiangshui, sex is not merely a want but an "abuse" through which he exercises oppressive control over women. His sex perversion does not indicate basic human instincts, but signifies a form of demonic patriarchal power in victimizing women. As Mackinnon remarks: "a rape is not an isolated or individual or moral transgression, but a terrorist act within a systematic context of group subjection, like lynching" (654). To Lin Shi, sex is never a human want. Since she has witnessed the scene of her mother's "adulterous act," Lin Shi formulates within her heart a deep sense of resentment against sexuality. Although she is still very young when she witnesses the episode, her psychology is traumatized by the things she has seen. She finds her mother being "pressed beneath" the soldier (7). Here, "press" refers to the Chinese character of "ya" 壓. This position between man and woman during sexual intercourse indeed manifests the relationship of male domination and female submission. Being too young to understand what is going on between her mother and the soldier, Lin Shi believes that the life of her mother is being threatened by the strange man. Although it is Lin Shi's misinterpretation, her reaction and fear have already hinted at her resentment against the violent and dominating nature of sex.

In addition, recalling the Confucian aphorism of "food and sex are human wants," "food" is neither a common human want for Lin Shi. It is true that she has an instinctive need for food, but her need for food is so overwhelming that it becomes neurotic. After marrying to Chen Jiangshui, it seems that the sole objective of Lin Shi's life is to stop herself from starvation. Whatever happens to her, she can endure

it as long as she could obtain some food afterwards.

> ... in her hunger, Lin Shi wolfed down the best meal she remembered ever having. It wasn't until she had finished that she noticed that Chen Jiangshui had been staring at her in a funny way. She looked down to discover that her pants were still down around her ankles. She had eaten this wonderful meal while she was naked from the waist down! (21).

While Confucius claims that "food" is a natural human need, Lin Shi's access to food is never natural. She has to betray her body in exchange for food. By pivoting on Lin Shi as well as her mother's terror of starvation, Li Ang has again criticized the exploitative nature of patriarchy, which operates to usurp women physically, morally, and economically.

The marriage system in Chinese society, as portrayed in the story, provides no protection for women but instead exercises victimization on them. Marriage is not the exchange of mutual love and support, but a hot bed for male exploitation and oppression of female. According to *Liji* [The book of rites], men preceding women is the correct relation of dominant and submissive and women following men is the beginning of the correct relation between husband and wife. In *The Butcher's Wife*, Lin Shi's marriage to Chen Jiangshui signals her entrance into a world of male brutalizing authority. In the course of the story, her mental condition gradually deteriorates. Before Li Shi is driven mad by the prolonged abuse, she has made some attempt to save herself from the damnation. In an attempt to escape from Chen Jiangshui's sexual abuse, Li Shi cheats him that she has period. However, her trick is seen through by Chen. Finding that it is not possible to avoid her husband's sexual perversion, Lin Shi resists by keeping silent. Overhearing the gossip of the villagers about herself – that she screams too loudly when "doing that thing" with Chen

Jiangshui, which indicates her enjoyment of sexual pleasure, Lin Shi's suffers a great attack. In her desperate struggle to preserve a little sense of self-dignity, Lin Shi no longer surrenders to her husband's command – she stops to scream when raped by him.

> ... . [Chen Jiangshui] eagerly pinned her on the dirt door of the living room. At first she tried desperately to free herself, but when she saw that escape was impossible, she stopped struggling and, from start to finish, her mouth tightly shut, not making a single sound.
>
> ... . He was rougher with her than ever. Yet no matter what he did, she didn't make a sound. When the pain became nearly unbearable, she bit down on her lower lip so hard that she broke the skin, and blood seeped into her mouth – salty, brackish blood (106).

The fact that Lin Shi has stopped her painful scream irritates Chen Jiangshui a lot as it greatly reduces his sadistic pleasure gained from torturing his sexual prey. He tries every cruel way to squeeze a cry from her. He beats her up even more outrageously, seduces her with the food, and finally tortures her with prolonged starvation and goes to an old acquaintance of his in the bawdy house. Amidst the most unbearable suffering of hunger, Lin Shi receives another blow to her life before she is driven into total madness. Haunted by the prolonged starvation, Lin Shi attempts to attain self-sufficiency by breeding ducklings. She scrimps together some "defloration money" that Chen Jiangshui mindlessly gives her after their first night, and buys some ducklings. The "defloration money" denotes the fact that the value and the identity of Lin Shi is equated with that of a whore, in which she is transformed from a human subject into an object of sexual transaction. Ironically, it also becomes the source of her last hope to strive for domestic security and independence. Lin Shi wishes that

by breeding ducklings, she will become self-sustainable and needs not submit to Chen Jiangshui's brutal desire. "The sight of her little ducklings fighting over the food and shedding their yellow down for pointed, stiff new feathers – some short, some long – always brought a smile to her face" (117). However, while on last hope she builds upon her "secret enterprise" (118), she encounters a brutal end. Chen Jiangshui, who will not allow Lin Shi any form of independence, mercilessly slaughters all the ducklings. With the death of her ducklings, Lin Shi's hope for a better life in the future is at the same time slaughtered. She is on the verge of mental collapses.

While the cruel and exploitative male society represented by Chen Jiangshui fails to provide protection but instead direct oppression against Lin Shi, the women community surrounding her neither grants her any companionship or support, but drives her into further desperation. If Chen Jiangshui is the casual agent of Lin Shi's madness, the women community in Lucheng is the chief accomplice.

One of the most disturbing facts in *The Butcher's Wife* is that not only men are responsible for women's victimization, but women themselves are also the operators of patriarchal oppression. In Lucheng, all the women surrounding Lin Shi are portrayed as the transmitters of the patriarchal law and strictures. They are nosy, superstitious and ignorant, getting together every morning around the ancient redbrick well to gossip, comment, criticize, and scandalize the affairs of the others. Their mentality is predominantly patriarchal. Once Lin Shi becomes their topic of rumours, the traumatization of her dignity and humanity never stops. Within this women community, Auntie Ah-Wang is the dominant figure in victimizing Lin Shi. Ah-Wang is herself a victim of patriarchal oppression, and she represents most distinctively the morbidity of Chinese women under the influence of an oppressive culture. The vivid description of her deformed body (particularly her once bounded-

feet) reflects her morbid mentality:

> Although once bound, they had subsequently been freed, which is why they weren't particularly small. Since there had never been any attempt to bind them into "three-inch golden lotuses," they were nearly as long as those of the average woman. They only difference was that she walked somewhat unsteadily, seemingly lifting her legs straight up, then setting them straight back down. She could only take small, mincing steps, and even those took a great deal of effort, so for her the simple act of walking hard work (24).

The deformation of Ah-Wang's feet symbolizes the disfiguration of her mind (Ng 193). Ah-Wang's inability to walk properly signifies her trapped mentality. Being stuck to the phallocratic values of patriarchy, Ah-Wang is unconscious of her own imprisonment, and is cruelly insensitive to other women's suffering and pain. Overlooking the fact that Lin Shi suffers severe sexual and spiritual torture from Chen Jiangshui, Ah-Wang claims that she is fortunate to marry Big-Butcher Chen: "no parents-in-law to lord it over her, no brothers- or sisters-in-law to care for, and no need to work in the field or go to sea – all she had to do was see to the daily needs of two people. That kind of good fortune comes only after generations of virtuous cultivation" (35). Ah-Wang's definition of a woman's good fortune is superficial as well as patriarchal – a woman's good fortune is to remain within the sphere of domesticity and serve the authorial figures in the family.

Ah-Wang is Lin Shi's nightmare. Being the transmitter of Chinese patriarchal values, she haunts the dignity of Lin Shi's life. She makes use of Lin Shi's deficiency to uphold herself as the model of virtue and chastity. She preys on Lin Shi's sexual activity and scandalizes it, spreading the rumour that Lin Shi, like her mother, enjoys being "fucked," so she screams every time she is doing that "thing"

(102-103). As a result, all the other village people criticize Lin Shi's excess and lack of restraint. Facing the gossip and accusation of the people, Lin Shi's sense of self-dignity, which has already been very fragile, is thoroughly destroyed. Ah-Wang steps further to demean Lin Shi by gossiping about the story of her mother. She condemns Lin's mother for adultery, malevolently vilifying both Lin Shi and her mother as sluts and claims that "you can't get tender shoots from a rotten bamboo stalk" (104). Overhearing this, Lin Shi experiences the first time in her life a mental breakdown:

> With what felt like an explosion in her head, Lin Shi's scalp began to tingle, and her whole head seemed to swell. Strange chirping noises assaulted her ears as her terror rose, and she was drenched in perspiration. ... In her confusion she thought she heard the wind whistling across the vast mudflats. The vein of the women began to filter through again: "... daughter following in her mother's footsteps. What's the difference between a woman like that and those bitches in Backstreet?" (104).

Lin Shi becomes neurotic. The destruction of her dignity by Ah-Wang's rumour and accusation, the prolonged sexual abuse by her husband, the spoil of her hope to gain independence by breeding ducklings and the most unbearable torture of starvation – all these sufferings eventually lead to Lin Shi's final out-burst. After Chen Jiangshai has taken her to the slaughter house where she witnesses the most horrible slaughtering of lives, she collapses and enters into an irrevocable stage of madness. She ultimately commits murder and Li Ang describes the murder scene vigorously. One night, Chen Jiangshui comes home with the butcher's life, and scolds Lin savagely. He rapes her and falls asleep.

> Lin Shi sat up ... and stared vacantly at the pale moonbeam streaming in through the tiny window. When the moonbeam passed over the blade of

> the knife, there was a flash of light. Lin Shi reached out and picked up the knife ... . She gripped it with both hands and stabbed downwards. In the darkness, the face of the man in a soldier's uniform flashed into view ... . Then it was a squealing, struggling pig with a butcher knife buried at an angle in its gullet, ... The geysers of blood began to converge, and for a brief moment, what look like a singe blooded pillar penetrated the inky darkness. I must be dreaming. Lin Shi rubbed her eyes. Suddenly the convulsions started, crumbling the pillar, and sending its thick blood splattering in all directions ... . Finally, seeing that it [the body] had all been cut into pieces, Lin Shi sat down. The ghostly white moonlight had retreated to the door-way. It'll all be over soon, and then everything will be fine, she thought (138).

The action of "slaughtering" enacted by Lin Shi represents the reversal of the husband-wife relationship. By turning Chen Jiangshui into a hog to be butchered, just as she has been "butchered," Lin Shi reverses the process of dehumanization. The knife, capable of penetrating and injuring the body, according to Freud, is a symbol for the phallus (Freud, Vol. XVII: 154). By picking up the knife and "stabbing downward" into the body of Chen Jiangshui, Lin Shi has actually performed the ritual of a female castration of the phallic power. The murder she enacts thus becomes an emblem of her violent transformation from a victimized object to a victimizing subject. It proves that womanhood is capable of empowerment through madness, in which the figure of the madwoman is able to become the agent of executing the oppressive male. Significant to note, the vision of the soldier who rapes Lin Shi's mother intrudes into the scene when Lin Shi is performing the murder. The two males, with whom the mother and the daughter exchange sex for food, merge into one. In murdering the

husband, Lin Shi in effect murders the oppressor of her mother at same time, avenging her mother and herself. Lin Shi's revenge, accordingly, takes on collective characteristics – the "slaughter" of the husband simultaneously relinquishes the patriarchal oppression and brutality he symbolizes.

Through the story of Lin Shi who is driven mad by her husband's sadistic sexual abuse and the society's exploitation, and who ultimately commits an outrageous murder in order to avenge herself and her wronged mother, Li Ang has vividly exposed the menace of patriarchy in victimizing women economically, physically as well as spiritually. Nevertheless, although the novel has portrayed female madness as a source of female empowerment which enables Lin Shi to avenge by enacting violent act, similar to her Chinese counterpart Tie Ning, Li Ang does not see female liberation through madness and murder as the ultimate ends. After Lin Shi's murdering act, the only change that occurs to the world of Lucheng is merely the physical disappearance of Chen Jiangshui, one of the many brutal husbands living in Chinese society. The patriarchal menace he embodies is never removed. Lin Shi does not obtain an ultimate triumph. In traditional Chinese society, any woman who murders her husband is presumed to have adulterous relationship. Despite the fact that they cannot find any evidence to prove that Lin Shi has an extra-marital affair, the authorities nonetheless sentence her to death penalty. As stated in the news reports: "... the killing of a man by his wife is a moral issue that affects all of society; such an offense cannot be condoned by reason of insanity. The authorities must treat this case with the utmost severity in order to stem the public outcry and restore healthy social tendencies" (News Report #1). According to this statement, the blame for the whole event is not to be put on the operator of female oppression (the patriarchal brutality as symbolized in the murderer's husband), but on the murderer (who is

herself a victim of patriarchal exploitation). To the "authorities," the healthiness of a society is based on the affirmation of patriarchal value and the elimination of any attempt to revolt against it. In News Report #2, such paternalistic moral is further affirmed:

> Even without proof of her infidelity, the public exhibition of an adulteress-murderess can serve as a warning against immorality, and in final analysis, the parading of Chen Lin Shi was a necessity. Surely all the women who saw her will take heed and refrain from imitating foreign women, who are always clamoring for equality and the right to attend Western schools. Such demands are actually little more than excuses for a woman to leave house and home and make a public spectacle for herself. They comprise a mockery of the code womanly conduct and destroy our age-old concepts of womanhood. We hope that the parade will inspire concerned citizens to redouble their efforts in the fight to stop the decline in womanly virtues.

Ah-Wang and the other village women of Lucheng unquestionably accept such views. Although it seems that Lin Shi has avenged the oppression of her mother and herself by killing Chen Jiangshui, the male domination of society, instead of being shaken, is ironically strengthened. All the women who overhear the sentence of Lin Shi regard her as a negative example of an untamable woman who tries to reject the age-old concepts of womanhood. Ever since, they are even more conscious to uphold their "womanly virtues," which can best be concluded in Ah-Wang's words: "As a woman, we're supposed to be tolerant and put our husbands above everything else" (102). As brilliantly pointed out by Daisy Ng, "in refusing to allow Lin and other women insight into the nature of the women's oppression, Li Ang wished to convey her pessimism on the headway Chinese women have made since the 1911 Revolution. Like Ah-Wang's

disfigured feet, the minds of Chinese women in the modern era continue to be distorted by phallocentrism rooted in society. Historical change has not changed patriarchy" (197).

By laying bare and make manifest the emotional and sexual abuse of women, the feminist agenda in both *I, Anna* and *The Butcher's wife* are explicit. Though Elsa Lewin and Li Ang are from two greatly different cultures, they have made essentially the same point about the historical oppression and repression of women. The gender conflict as represented in the husband-wife relationship is a conflict between victimizer and victim, in which economic and sexual depredation is the index of oppression. In the discussion of the murderous madwoman, however, the motive and the performance of the murder she actualizes is no longer portrayed as a matter of her consciousness, as she is driven into a state of unconscious hysteria by the most direct operation of patriarchal power – the execution of sexual abuse and exploitation by the ruthless male who treats all women as objects of proprietary sexual desire. While sexual desire represents a masculine ethos of self-will and self-aggrandizement, women become victims of male sexuality. As remarked by Catherine Mackinnon, "woman through male eyes is sex object, that by which man knows himself at once as man and as subject (538). Neurosis, then, becomes the most direct female response to male domination of the body. In both *I, Anna* and *The Butcher's Wife*s, this conflict between women and the patriarchal system is resolved by a violent act enacted by the victimized women on a physical and a symbolic level, who seize demonic power through their madness. On a physical level, their wrongdoers are killed and their wrongdoing is terminated. On a symbolic level, the murder of the men signifies their castration enacted by the feminist avengers, which in a deeper sense means the

subversion of the patriarchal power by the female power. However, none of the writers has regarded female empowerment and escape through madness and murder as the valid ways for female emancipation. Both of the heroines of Elsa Lewin and Li Ang deserve a tragic death. While Anna commits suicide as a result of her conscientious sense of guilt, Lin Shi is punished by the public trial which is governed by patriarchal discourse. Indeed, male domination in society has not been overturned. It seems that to both the Western and Chinese women writers, female empowerment through madness and violent destruction is tenuous. As long as society's prejudiced view against women still pertain and that it continues to be operated by the ideology of patriarchal discourse, the true emancipation of women will never be possible. Nevertheless, if we compare the Western writer with the Chinese one, it seems that the Western writer has held a more optimistic view towards the future of women's liberation. In *The Butcher's Wife*, the murder performed by Lin Shi has not aroused any enlightenment in the women community. Instead of contemplating the case of Lin shi as a reflection of their own oppression, they see it as a lesson – that nonconformity to patriarchal codes deserves severe punishment. Comparatively speaking, Elsa Lewin's perception is a little bit more optimistic. Although the offender of the patriarchal code, Anna, deserves a tragic death, she has nonetheless got someone who tries to understand her. By placing Inspector Bernie in alliance with Anna, Lewin has at least provided us with a glimpse of hope that the "attempted understanding" by Bernie towards Anna might possibly be transformed into a "true understanding" in the future.

Chapter Five

Conclusion

In *A Literature of Their Own*, Elaine Showalter concludes that the developments of women's writings in England from Brontes to the second half of the 20th century can be divided into three stages. First, there is a prolonged phase of *imitation* of the prevailing modes of the dominant tradition, and *internalization* of its standards of art and its views on social roles. Second, there is a phase of *protest* against these standards and values, and *advocacy* of minority rights and values, including a demand for autonomy. Finally, there is a phase of self-discovery, a turning inward freed from some of the dependency of opposition, a search for identity (13).

In China, the establishment of women's writings only emerges in the 20th century. In tracing the development of feminist consciousness in modern Chinese women's literature, Dai Jinhua 戴錦華, a specialist in Chinese women's writings, states that the style and thematic concern of women's writing has undergone great changes throughout the 20th century in China, particularly in the 1980s and 90s.

> With unspoken consent, many women writers employ a common strategy – a kind of approved "female" way of writing which is refreshingly delicate, elegant and deviating but will never offend "the conventional mode." This is a necessary attribute if a woman writer wants to get the entrance ticket into the literary cannon. ... This strategy is forced, but is at the same time representing the pilgrimage and spiritual biography of a woman's awakening of self-consciousness. ... If the term "female" is merely a connotation of the writer's gender and her style of writing or if she masks her name and sex with male pseudonym, her writings will receive extraordinary respect and

> praise. However, when her work becomes a woman's self-narrative with "female" being the subject of narration, in which its portrayal of a woman's realistic living situation subvert or oppose to the conventional norms, it will undeniably encounter public antagonism, accusation, and even ignorance and despise.
>
> 似乎心照不宣地，多數女作家所採取的共同策略是，以一種得到認可的'女性'方式開始她們的寫作，那是所謂'清麗、越軌的筆緻'，是一種不至于冒犯'常識'特質，一種細緻和典雅。作爲一種必需的貢品，這是女作家的入場券。…… 這是一種被迫的策略，它同時是真實的女性漸趨自覺的心路歷程和精神傳記 …… 當女性僅僅是寫作者的性別身份與風格特徵時，當她們化妝爲男人 …… 而寫作時，她們的作品得到不一樣的尊重與讚美 …… 而當她的作品作爲女性自陳，其中對女性真實生存境況的描述、女性作爲話語主體呈現一種顛覆、至少是異己的力量時，它就無疑將面臨著公然的敵意、非難，而更爲深刻的是一種漠視與輕蔑。[1]

The rise of the thematic concern of madwoman and manslaughter in both Western and Chinese women's literature, to a large extent, represents the vision of a woman searching for a means of self-expression and struggling against a code (the patriarchal discourse) that denies female individuality. The representation of madwoman in women's literature, in Showalter's words, is a way to *protest* against the patriarchal standards and values, and a process of self-discovery and searching for self-identity. In Dai Jinhua's words, it represents the pilgrimage and spiritual biography of a woman's awakening of self-consciousness, showing a kind of subversion against the patriarchal discourse.

Despite the fact that the subjects of female madness and murder have been

examined from various perspectives in different times in Western and Chinese culture, my study highlights a cross-cultural comparison in which I have ascertained a number of similarities shared by the Western and Chinese women's writings this thesis deals with. Through comparing and contrasting two types of murderous madwoman – "the murderous daughter" and "the murderous wife" from both Western and Chinese women's writings – as a means of investigating the theme of woman, madness and murder in two different frameworks – the father-daughter dynamics and husband-wife sexual politics, this thesis comes to three conclusions concerning the implications of female madness and manslaughter.

First of all, both the Western and Chinese writers represent mental health as defined by masculine / patriarchal code. Although the 20th century is an age of growing feminist awareness in both the East and West, the fundamental cultural assumption of femininity still prevails – women have to be submissive to patriarchal authority. A woman who accepts and conforms to her assigned female role, either as a filial daughter, a nurturing and sacrificial mother, or a submissive and virtuous wife, which is conditioned by the male culture, is considered to be mentally healthy. However, if she acts out the devalued female role or rejects the gender-role restrictions, she is regarded by society (and also by the orthodox psychotherapy) as "mad" or "insane." Secondly, female madness is also represented as the result of patriarchal imprisonment or brutalization, which suppresses and victimizes women, confining them to extreme stereotypes and depriving them of their individuality, autonomy and creativity. Social institutions such as family and marriage system which effectuate patriarchal exploitation are portrayed as the causal agents in women's mental illness and their destructive acts. Thirdly, female madness also represents the woman's refusal to enter the world of "patriarchal normality." The qualities traditionally

denied a respectable woman, such as passion, desire, aggressiveness, are dramatized in the character of the madwoman, in which her "madness" becomes a source of empowerment, enabling her to act as a violent murderer and perform a destructive action (manslaughter) in order to subvert the patriarchal oppression. Madness, representing both images of feminine repression and feminist expression, is used as a resistance for both the writers and their literary figures to deconstruct patriarchal normality and to subvert the symbolic social order that patriarchy represents.

Although the Western and Chinese works this thesis deals with share a number of similarities, there are two fundamental differences that separate the Western ones from the Chinese ones. First of all, although both the Western and Chinese women writers have exposed through their works the existential problems faced by women, the Western writers tend to concentrate on the spiritual aspects while the Chinese writer focus more on the materialistic aspects. In Kitty Fitzgerald's *Marge*, the greatest torture the heroine suffers is the exploitation of her humanity and self-dignity by the patriarchal figures. The violent revenge she enacts represents her desperate attempt to reassert her own individuality and dignity. The fact that she allies first with her own mother and later with another woman who resembles her own mother proves that the things she needs most in her life are spiritual companionship and support. Similarly, in Elsa Lewin's *I, Anna*, the heroine suffers from mental derangement after the attack of marriage failure. To her, the greatest storm that the unsuccessful marriage brings her is not poverty but the loss of love and spiritual reliance. As she states in the Prologue, what she needs most in her life is to have someone who can love and truly understand her. The Chinese writers do not overlook the spiritual aspects of the problems their heroines face, but they tend to put more emphasis on their materialistic vulnerability. In *The Cliff in the Afternoon*, the protagonist Han

Guixin commits murder not merely because she has a deep sense of hatred against the male, but also because she has an intense feeling of jealousy originated from her insatiable materialistic desire. Coming from a poor family, Han Guixin needs wealth and power to assert her identity. She even expects marriage to redeem her from her dubious past and poverty. Although the writer does not agree with Han Guixin's materialistic preoccupation, neither has she denied the fact that economic insecurity has always been a great problem to women in the Chinese society. In *The Butcher's Wife*, hunger is employed as the central metaphor of female problem in Chinese society. The heroine Lin Shi is vulnerable to patriarchal exploitation largely because she is economically dependent. In the traditional Chinese feudal system, women have no right to inherit property. In order to survive, Lin Shi has to be "traded" as commodities on the conjugal "market." When Lin Shi is further victimized by her husband Chen Jiangshui after the marriage, she is impotent to rebel chiefly because Chen Jiangshui has complete economic control over her. Since Lin Shi has a neurotic fear of starvation, she has to endure the sexual perversion of Chen Jiangshui in exchange for food. The marriage of Lin Shi thus becomes a dehumanized exchange of sex for food. Through the portrayal of Lin Shi's dehumanizing marriage, the writer has exposed the economic nature of women's oppression in Chinese patriarchal culture.

The dissimilarity in their emphasis on the spiritual and material aspects of women's problem in society between the Western and Chinese writers may have to do with their different conceptions about humanity and life. The perception of the Western women writers is closer to the religious aspect of Western culture that emphasizes one's spiritual nourishment through the relationship with God. In Kitty Fitzgerald's *Marge*, the heroine draws support and comfort from the Goddesses that

appear to her after her mental breakdown. Although the Goddesses might only be her neurotic hallucination, the fact that she is able to strengthen herself and take revenge through the "assistance" and "companion" of the Goddesses elaborate the importance of spiritual support to a woman's struggle in oppressive society. In Elsa Lewin's *I, Anna*, although there is no apparent religious disposition, the prologue at the beginning of the story in which Anna expresses her aspiration for spiritual support and understanding from others has already addressed the spiritual orientation of the novel. The Chinese writers' representations of women's problem in society seem to have a more secular and realistic orientation. In ancient Chinese society, the teaching of Confucius plays a dominant role in formulating the Chinese way of life. Although his doctrines were largely overthrown in the May-Fourth Movement, his influence on the mentality of the Chinese people is deep-rooted. Confucius talks little about traditional religion or about gods. When a student asks about the worship of gods and spirits, Confucius replies, "we do not know yet how to serve man; how can we know how to serve gods" 未能事人，焉能事鬼? In response to the student's next question about death, Confucius said, "we do not know yet about life; how can we know abut death" 未知生，焉知死?[2] Such kind of evasion about the issue of otherworld proves that Confucianism deals chiefly with the this-world issues. Besides, the Confucian aphorism of "food and sex are human want" 食色性也 [shi se xing ye] also addresses the Confucius orientation in the instinctive and physical needs of human body. The Chinese society our Chinese writers have portrayed in their novels is a society being strongly influenced by this Confucius orientation. The writers themselves might not regard materiality as more important then spirituality, but they do agree that for a woman to struggle for independence in a society which is predominantly materialistic and emphasizes much on practicality, the first obstacle she

meets will unavoidably relate to the materialistic aspect. This might explain why our Chinese writers would focus more on the portrayal of the practical and realistic aspects of their heroines's struggle in the oppressive patriarchal society.

Moreover, the differences in terms of political and economic situation between China and the West may also explain why the writers have conceptualized spirituality and materiality in dissimilar ways. Although it has longed been argued that the social constructions of the patriarchal society in both East and West render women legally powerless and economically marginal, with more advanced economic and technological developments, economic insecurity seems to impose less threat on the women in the West. China, being regarded as a developing country, is still struggling to become economically competent (note that the Taiwanese society that Li Ang portrays in *The Butcher's Wife* is also poor and underdeveloped). This adds up to the burden of the Chinese women, in which their struggle for equality and independence is from time to time troubled by their economic insecurity and vulnerability. While Marge and Anna aspires to gain spiritual support and respect from others, the liberation of their Chinese counterparts Han Guixin and Lin Shi is fundamentally problematized by their economic dependence.

I must claim that this thesis does not intend to overlook the spiritual aspects of women problems that have been portrayed in the works of the Chinese writers, while the materialistic aspects represented by the Western writers should neither be ignored. What the above comparison intend to address, is the different degree of emphasis the Western and Chinese writers have put on the two different aspects.

The second difference between the Western and Chinese women writers in their writings is that although both of them have portrayed madness as a source of female empowerment and the murder that the heroine carries out as a way to subvert

patriarchal oppression and to emancipate herself, their perceptions on the validity of these means differ. Whereas the Western women writers tend to romanticize the potential of female empowerment through madness and the possibility of female emancipation through violent acts, the Chinese writers adopt a more pessimistic view towards such a possibility. In *Marge*, madness and murder remain metaphors for transgression and empowerment against patriarchy, in which the story terminates immediately after the murder is performed, symbolizing the ultimate explosion of the heroine's female power and romanticizing the righteousness of her violent act. In *I, Anna*, although the murderer Anna finally deserves a punishment – she is not punished by the authority, but by her "conscience," in which she commits suicide after recalling the memory of her crime, the narration of the novel has at least in some parts been taken over by a romantic discourse. The investigator Bernie, though himself the symbol of patriarchal law and has shown personal interest in Anna's case because he takes her as the substitute of his own lost wife, he has nonetheless been made to "forgive" and to "understand" the pain and sufferings of Anna, though his attempt might not be successful. The exclamation "I destroyed her" (300) Bernie makes after the suicide of Anna, seems to represent the destruction of the female avenger by patriarchal law. But in a deeper sense, it also symbolizes Bernie's doubt about the patriarchal code he internalizes. By placing Bernie in the position of trying to help Anna escape her legal responsibility, the story has at least placed a glimpse of hope on the possibility of the re-revaluation of patriarchal law and order that suppress and victimize women. Opposing to their Western counterparts, the Chinese writers are much more pessimistic about the emancipation of Chinese women. In *The Cliff in the Afternoon*, Tie Ning addresses the limitations of empowerment through madness and the negativity of avenging patriarchy through murder. Instead of empowering

and liberating themselves from patriarchal oppression, the heroine Han Guixin and her mother are driven into further imprisonment after their rebellions. Similarly, in *The Butcher's Wife*, Li Ang has her heroine punished for her madness and her murderous act. Lin Shi must face a trial by the Chinese authority after the murder, thereby repeating her mother's ill fate. Moreover, the rite of matricide performed by Lin Shi has not aroused any awareness in other women, as they do not regard the execution of Lin Shi by public trial as unjust. Instead, they takes the rebellion of Lin Shi as a negative example and are all the more conscious to affirm their compliance and submissiveness to the patriarchal demand. Apparently, the Chinese writers do not see the murder of patriarchs as workable and they have melancholically hinted at the impossibility of the murderer's salvation.

The difference between the Western and Chinese writers in their perceptions of the possibility of women's liberation through madness and murder can be explained by their cultural differences. In the West, the concept of self is basically individualistic, in which the subjecthood of a person is formulated by one's psychoanalytic self and ego identity. In their process of struggling for individuality, self-identity and independence, the Western women lead a more direct road as the process relies chiefly on the inward searching of the woman's subjectivity. In China, however, the traditional concept of self is identified by Confucian moralistic discourse. The Chinese concept of self, instead of being defined as a "psychoanalytic self," is a "body self" which effectuates as a "relational role-self." The concept of "ego" or "self identity" does not exist in the Chinese mentality and the importance of "roles" are much greater than "selves." A person thus has no sense of individuality and can only achieve "self-fulfillment" through accomplishing his roles in society (Tan 141-147). Accordingly, women's emancipation in China is problematized in the sense that in

their process of struggling for a self-definition and autonomy, they are entrapped by the request of "role-fulfillment." In the case of Tie Ning's story, the heroines are further confined by patriarchal imprisonment. Although they try to revolt against the patriarchal oppression by discarding their feminine roles, they have ironically further entrapped themselves within the patriarchal discourse by taking up the masculine roles. In the case of *The Butcher's Wife*, Lin Shi cannot truly liberate herself as she is unable as well as un-conscious to discard the submissive feminine roles assigned to her which are so strictly and oppressively affirmed by society. The murder she takes on her oppressor can only be regarded as her impulsive angry revenge and a temporal relief of her victimization. The difference in the formation of "selfhood" in the Western and Chinese culture may explain why whereas the Western writers hold a more optimistic view on the possibility of female emancipation, the Chinese writers are much more pessimistic about it.

When applying the concept of Western feminism to the discussion of Chinese works, it is necessary to bear in mind their different cultural contexts. Yet it is the same misleading if we exaggerate the discrepancies between the two contexts and presume the invalidity of cross-cultural comparison. Daisy Ng's comment is insightful:

> Insofar as "woman is traditionally use-value for man, exchange-value among men" (Irigaray 105), both Chinese women and their Western counterparts share the common struggle to free their bodies from being the property and propriety of men. Feminist scholarship, whether Chinese or Western, works toward the same goal of exposing the collusion between ideology and cultural practices and deconstructing predominantly male cultural paradigms (182).

No matter how the Western and Chinese writers differentiate in their perceptions of female madness and manslaughter, they resemble each other in the sense that they have taken pains to expose the reduced status of women in modern as well as in pre-modern societies (the society of Li Ang's *The Butcher's Wife* is pre-modern). The Western and Chinese women writers are from two widely divergent cultures, but "the treatment of women as the 'second sex' in Occidental or Oriental cultures remains more or less the same" (Chen Zhongming 351). By representing the operation of patriarchal oppression in the sphere of male-female relationships, particularly in terms of father-daughter and husband-wife relationships, these writers have deconstructed the matter-of-course ideology in patriarchal / male discourse. Though neither the Western nor the Chinese writers suggest any new ideological project conducive to women's emancipation in particular, there seems to be a common view among all these writers – there should be a thorough reconsideration of the patriarchal culture as well as the gender stereotyping that our society so persistently sustains. As Karen Horney remarks in *Feminine Psychology*,

> An additional and very important factor in the situation is that women have adapted themselves to the wishes of men and felt as if their adaptation were their true nature. That is, they see or saw themselves in the way that their men's wishes demanded of them; unconsciously they yielded to the suggestion of masculine thought. If we are clear about the extent to which all our being, thinking, and doing conform to these masculine standards, we can see how difficult it is for the individual man and also for the individual woman really to shake off this mode of thought (56-57).

Despite the historical, cultural and ideological differences between the East and West, Horney's view is valid to both the Chinese and the Western people. If we are to see

the progress in resolving gender conflict, it is important for both "the individual man" and also for "the individual woman" to understand the essence and the effect of the patriarchal standards. There seems to be a common assumption among the Western and Chinese writers that only through a truly mutual effort between man and woman can the problems of gender conflict be truly eliminated.

I would like to conclude my thesis with a paragraph from the prologue of Elsa Lewin's protagonist, Anna:

> But I need someone to talk to. I think something is happening to me. I don't know what it is. I don't know how it will end. I want someone to understand. I don't ask for forgiveness. I don't forgive myself. But I would like some to understand.
>
> If someone understands, it might be proof that I lived. That I mattered. I was a person in pain. And I mattered (1).

This truest heartfelt wish does not apply only to the Western and Chinese madwomen and their creators that this thesis deals with, it also belongs to other victimized women in patriarchy and other women writers who meet great obstacles in gaining respect in their own national literary canons. There is certainly a correlation between literary figure of madwoman and its creator, the female author who writes within the limits of patriarchal culture. The female author's experience of writing is just like the living experience of the madwoman. They are both confined in the patriarchal house of representation. As Gilbert and Gubar suggest, women are "metaphorical orphans" in patriarchal culture (251). The attempt of the female author to deconstruct the patriarchal discourse and to represent women's living experience is largely a struggle against the male-dominated literary canon. While the madwoman like Anna wants others to understand her pain and aspiration, the female

author also needs others' respect and understanding of her narrative. In this study, I have limited myself in both spatial and temporal dimensions. Indeed, the scope of study I conduct in this thesis on the theme of female madness and manslaughter is relatively small, representing only a tiny area of the whole complex subject. Nevertheless, by tracing some of the stories about "madwoman," it is hoped that her tortures and pains would be voiced and hence be "understood." And more importantly, the narrative voice of the female writer, who is the double of the "madwoman," will be heard and recognized. "If someone understands, it might be proof that [the woman] lives. That [she] matters. [She is] a person in pain. [But she] matters." It is only through a mutual understanding and respect between male and female that the gender conflict could be truly resolved. As Maggie, one of the protagonists in *Marge* states, "men and women can discover joy, honesty and openness in their relationships, provided that men stop wanting to dominate, and maintain dual standards, and women refuse to resort to false submission" (18).

Notes

Chapter One

[1] For the detailed discussion of the three prototypes, see Showalter (10-16).

[2] This assumption, according to Philip W. Martin, was adopted since Plato and was particularly common during the Renaissance (See Martin 14-27).

[3] It is worth noticing that early in the nineteenth century, some extraordinary women writers had already contributed to break the male monopoly on the representation of literary madness. Charlotte Brontë was generally regarded as the prominent pioneer. Jane Austen, Mary Shelly, Emily Brontë and Emily Dickinson were also the leading figures.

[4] It should be noticed that comparing Elsa Lewin to the Chinese woman writers, though she also addresses the limitation of female emancipation through madness and murder, her vision is comparatively less tragic as she has made the male protagonist of the story in alliance with the heroine and try to understand her pain.

Chapter Two

[1] For details, see Vieth, Ilsa. *Hysteria: A History of a Disease.*

[2] It should be noted that madness is regarded as a female malady also because it is experienced by more women than men. In Elaine Showalter's *The Female Malady*, she mentions that the statistical overrepresentation of women among the mentally ill has been well documented by historians and psychologists. In Elizabeth Howell and Marjorie Bayes's edited work, *Women and Mental Health*, there is a comprehensive study of data and theory (Quoted in Showalter 1985: 251). As early as the seventeenth century, the files of the doctor Richard Napier show nearly twice as many cases of mental disorder among his women patients as among men. For details of

this record, refer to MacDonald, Michael. *Mystical Bedlam: Madness, Anxiety, and Healing in Seventeenth-century England* (Quoted in Showalter 1985: 252). Records show that by the middle of the nineteenth century, women were the majority of clients for private and public psychiatric hospitals, outpatient mental health services, and psychotherapy (Showalter 1985: 3).

[3] According to Ilsa Vieth, during the Middle Ages, hysteria was taken as a visible token of bewitchment, denoting deviant kinds of behaviour associated with women, which was then used to justify denigrating women and subjecting them to strict control.

[4] Apart from Karen Horney and those names mentioned in this thesis, the traditional psychoanalytic theories about women, especially Freud's, have also been extensively criticized by Simone de Beauvoir, Clara Thompson, Natalie Shainess, Betty Friedan, Albert Adler, Thomas Szasz, Harry Stack Sullivan, etc.

[5] Writers like Hélène Cixous and Xavière Gauthier who write from a French feminist perspective, for instance, regard "hysterics" as admirable in the late nineteenth century and in particular celebrate the championship of Freud's famous patient "Dora" in defiant womanhood, whose opposition, expressed in physical symptoms and coded speech, subverted the linear logic of male (See Showalter 1985: 5). For a detailed discussion on these two writers, see Bernheimer and Kahane (1-32).

[6] From Shoshana Felman's article, "Woman and Madness: The Critical Phallacy" (Quoted in Showalter 1985: 252).

[7] In the treatise, Wollstonecraft emphasized the role of the environment, of culture and education in particular, in the creation of differences between men and women. If the inferiority of women is culturally prescribed, rather than biologically destined,

the equality of women can only be attained by altering the environment.

[8] Other writers who have drawn considerable scholarly attention include Marie Cardinal, Marge Piercy, Joanne Greenberg and Anaïs Nin ect.

[9] In Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*, the villain is Sir William Bradshaw, a personification of tyranny. Being a famous psychiatrist, he sees all mental illness as merely "lacking proportions." He mishandles Septimus Warren Smith's breakdown and mercilessly locks her up. In Plath's *The Bell Jar* she exposes the adverse effects of sexist culture on American women, in which the narrator as well as the protagonist is crushed by a world of masculine malevolence. Lessing, in *The Four-Gated City*, criticizes the hypocrisy of the very humanity of Dr. Lamb who represents power itself. In another story "To Room Nineteen," Matthew Rawlings, the causal agent of the madness of the protagonists, Susan Rawlings, is blamed for his emotionless "intelligence" and "rationality." In *Wide Sargasso Sea*, the protagonist Antionette is tyrannized and driven mad by her husband, Rochester, who is a merciless fortune-hunter. For Atwood's protagonist of *Surfacing*, male power is totally impersonal, embodied in a group of oppressors she calls "the Americans." In the short story "The Yellow Wallpaper", the villain is John, a censorious and paternalistic physician treats the "mental illness" of the narrator scientifically, depriving her of any chance to express herself.

[10] See Schneider (17).

[11] See Etienne Balaz (237). (Cited in Schneider 14).

[12] From later epochs, there are examples such as Li Bai 李白, the seventh-century poet, who identified himself as "basically a madman of Chu / madly singing and laughing at Confucius" 我本楚狂人,鳳歌笑孔丘. Quoted from Li Bai's poem "Lu shan yao" 廬山謠 [Song of lu mountain]. Translation from Obata, Shigeyoshi. *The*

Works of Li Po. 162-163. The fourteenth-century poet Gao Qi, in political self-exile, wrote about his rustic locale where he endured the ridicule of the locals who called him a "muddle-headed scholar of Lu 魯 [Confucius' state]" and a veritable madman of Chu. See Mote, Frederick. "A Fourteenth Century Poet: Kao Ch'i." 243. These two examples are cited in Schneider (215).

[13] In 1924 legislation was passed giving equal rights to men and women in law, marriage, education, economic opportunity and political participation in China. Yet, the institutionalization of equal rights for women did not bring about a substantial improvement in women's lives, for traditional values were still predominant and resistant in society.

[14] In the famous May-Fourth Journal, *Xingqingnain* 新年青 [New Youth], Hu Shi 胡適 and Lu Xun 魯.迅, published a series of feminist treatises, criticizing the cultural imposition of "virtue" and "chastity" upon women, and advocating the liberation of women "as a prerequisite for the political liberation of China." Such kind of proclamation exposes the fact that in May Fourth men's representation of women, they viewed women's emancipation as serving larger purposes rather than as being an end in itself.

[15] Note that the most famous literary critic of modern Chinese literature, C.T.Hsia, for instance, discusses at length merely one woman writer, Zhang Ailang 張愛玲 [Eileen Chang] in his *A History of Modern Chinese Fiction* published in 1961.

[16] For another view of literary representation of women in Chinese vernacular fiction from the late imperial period, see Yenna Wu's *The Chinese Virago: A Literary Theme*.

[17] Other writers like Yang Jiang 楊絳, Ling Shuhua 凌淑華, Xie Bingying 謝冰瑩, Bing Xin 冰心, Lu Yin 盧隱, Feng Yuanjun 馮沅君, and Xiao Hong 蕭紅 etc. are

the early women writers contributing to the creation of modern and vernacular Chinese literature. Somewhat later, Zhang Ailing emerges and becomes an internationally well-known woman writer.

[18] Notice that during the ten-year Cultural Revolution, women's literature entered into a stage of vacuum in the People's Republic.

[19] From Norma Diamond's review of Margery Wolf's *Revolution Postponed: Women in Contemporary China. Journal of Asian Studies* (November 1985): 136. (Quoted in Duke xiii).

[20] From Emily Honig. "Socialist Revolution and Women's Liberation in China – A Review Article." *Journal of Asian Studies* (February 1985): 329-336, 335. The books reviewed in this article include Johnson, Kay Ann. *Women, the Family, and Peasant Revolution in China*, Chicago: University Press of Chicago, 1983; Stracey, Judith. *Patriarchy and Socialist Revolution in China.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983; and Andors, Phyllis. *The Unfinished Liberation of Chinese Women, 1949-1980.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983 (Quoted in Duke xiii).

[21] It should be noted that while the political and social movements in Mainland China provide the context for women's movements to develop, Taiwan's situation is different. Taiwan was ceded to Japan by an unequal treaty in 1895. Japan's fifty-year colonial rule "intensified the already existent submissive nature of women's position" in Taiwan (Yao: 199). In 1949 the Guomindang 國民黨 [The Nationalist Party] and its Nationalist government retreated to Taiwan after the Civil War. To counteract drastic changes in the mainland, the Nationalist government reaffirmed tradition and cultural heritage. In order to tighten social control, the government encouraged women to play supportive and subservient roles both at home and in

society. The Central Women's Department, headed by Madame Jiang Gai-shi 蔣介石夫人, propagated the maternal image of women and promoted "feminine virtues" through the mass media, formal education and its women's policy. It was not until the 1970s when Lu Xiulian 呂秀蓮 came back to Taiwan and initiated women's movement that the traditional role of women in a patriarchal society was questioned (Ng 179-180).

Meanwhile a revitalized modern Chinese literature has been developed in Taiwan since the 1960's with women writers like Li Ang 李昂, Xiao Sa 蕭颯, Liao Huiying 廖輝英, Su Weizhen 蘇偉貞, Yuan Qiongqiong 袁瓊瓊, Zhu Tianwen 朱天文, Zhu Tianxin 朱天心, and others. In 1982, a small group of women in Taibei launched a monthly magazine *Fu nu xin zhi* 婦女新知 [Awakening] with the object of raising women's consciousness and voicing feminist opinions.

[22] The post-Mao literary efflorescence in women's literature is built up by various prominent writers. Yang Mo 楊沫, Zong Pu 宗璞, Hang Junyi 韋君宜, Ru Zhijuan 茹志鵑 becomes famous since the 1950s. Highly educated writers like Zhang Jie 張潔, Shen Rong 諶容, Li Heixin 李蕙薪, Wen Xiaoyu 溫小鈺, Cheng Naishan 程乃珊, Dai Houying 戴厚英, Hang Yin 航鷹 grew up in the 1950s and 60s and earn their fame since the 1970s. Zhang Kangkang 張抗抗, Zhang Xinxin 張辛欣, Wang Anyi 王安憶, Tie Ning 鐵凝, Lu Xing'er 陸星兒 are the "zhiqing" 知青 [rusticated youth, or sent-down youth] who have experienced the Rustication – or "Up to the Mountains and Down to the Villages" Movement. Fan Xiaoqing 范小青, Liu Suola 劉索拉, Yu Shan 喻杉, Can Xue 殘雪, Chi Li 池莉, etc., are the younger writers who increasingly draw attention in this decade.

[23] Note that the name "female literary canon" or "female writings" only emerges in the 1990s (See Xu 1).

Chapter Three

[1] Some examples of these findings include those of James Mellaart at Catal Huyuk, Marija Gimbutas's *The Goddesses And Gods of Old Europe 6500-3500B.C.* (1982), E.O. Jame's *The Cult of The Mother Goddess* (1959), and Erich Neumann's *The Great Mother* (1995). (Quoted from McCance 166).

[2] There is no English translation available for this story; the translations in this chapter are all mine.

[3] The Latin verb "confessare" consists of two parts: "con" is used to enhance the meaning of "fateri," which means "to utter, declare, disclose, manifest, avow, acknowledge" (See Reineke 39-40).

[4] Whitenack, Judith A. "A New Look at Autobiography and Confession." *Ball State University Forum.* 23.3 (Summer 1982): 33-43 (Quoted in Ngai 41).

[5] See Jaroslav Prušeks's study on the rise of subjectivism, individualism and pessimism in modern Chinese literature in the article "Subjectivism and Individualism in Modern Chinese Literature." *The Lyrical and the Epic.* Ed. Leo Ou-fan Lee. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1980. 1-28. Also see Chen Sihe 陳思和 (155-78).

[6] In the "Mei gui men"《玫瑰門》conference held in 1989, Tie Ning states: "I believe if I do not portray woman's meanness, ugliness, her enchantment cannot be fully exposed" 我認爲，如果不寫出女人的卑鄙和醜陋，反而不能真正展示女人的魅力 (Cheng 773).

Chapter Four

[1] For a detailed description of Anna O.'s case, see Freud, Sigmund. "A Case of Hysteria (1901-1905)." *The Standared Edition of The Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Frued.* Vol. VII. 21-47.

[2] See "Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis, Part III (1914)." *The Standard Edition of The Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Frued.* Vol. XVII. 149-169.

[3] In Freud's clinical analysis, there is a record about the patient who does not remember anything of what he has repressed, but "acts it out." He reproduces it not as a memory, but as an action (Vol. IV. 150). Like Freud's patient, Anna is not fully conscious of her own action when she is enacting it. She merely acts out her fear and anger and dissatisfaction in reality at the critical moment.

[4] Comparing to the other works this thesis deals with, Li Ang's *The Butcher's Wife* seems to have aroused the greatest attention in Chinese and Western scholarships. Some important essays about the work are as follows:

Zhongming Chen. "Theorising about New Modes of Representation and Ideology in the Postmodern Age: The Practice of Margeret Atwood and Li Ang." *Canadian Review of Comparative.* 21.3 (September 1994): 341-54.

Ying-ying Chien. "Deconstructing Patriarchy/Reconstructing Womanhood: Feminist Readings of Multicultural Women's Murder Fictions." *Tamking Review.* 26.1-2 (Autumn-Winter 1995):265-87.

Kuei-fen Chiu. "Taking Off: A Feminist Approach to Two Contemporary Women's Novels in Taiwan." *Tamkang Review.* 23.1-4 (Fall-Summer 1992-93): 709-33.

Howard Goldblatt. "Sex and Society: The Fiction of Li Ang." *Worlds Apart: Recent Chinese Writing and Its Audiences.* Ed. Howard Goldblatt. Armonk, N.Y.: M.E.Sharpe, 1990. 253-267.

Danya Lin 林丹婭. "Normality within Abnormality: The Husband-Slaughtering Complex" 畸態中的常態 – 殺夫式情結. *Dangdai zhongguo nuxing wenxue shilun* 當代中國文學史論. Xiamen: Xiamen daxue chubanshe 廈門大學出版社, 1995. 203-

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Xiuling Lin 林秀玲. "The interrelationship between the gender roles and the illumination of selfhood in Li Ang's *The Butcher's Wife*" 李昂〈殺夫〉中性別角色的相互關係和人格呈現. *Nuxing zhuyi yu zhongguo wenxue* 女性主義與中國文學 [Feminism and Chinese Literature]. Ed. Weiling Zhong 鐘慧玲. Taiwan: Liren shuju 里仁書局, 1997.

Joyce C. H. Liu. "From Loo Port to Taipei: The World of Women in Lee Ang's Works." *Fu Jen Studies: Literature and Linguistics.* 19 (1986): 65-88.

Sheung-yuen Daisy Ng. "Feminism in the Chinese Context: Li Ang's *The Butcher's Wife*." *Modern Chinese Literature.* 4.1-2 (Spring-Fall 1988): 177-200.

--- "The Labyrinth of Meaning: A Reading of Li Ang's Fiction." *Tamkang Review.* 18 (1987-88): 141-50.

Shirley J. Paolini. "Eros and Thanatos: Psychological Perspectives on Madame Bovery and The Butcher's Wife." *Tamkang Review.* 23.1-4 (Fall-Summer 1992-1993): 693-707.

Chapter Five

[1] Dai Jinhua 戴錦華. "Da lu nu zuo jia de di yu yu e sheng – Wang Angyi, Tie Ning, Zhang Jie de zuo pin zhong de nu xing huo jiu zhi lu" 大陸女作家的低語與惡聲 — 王安憶、鐵凝、張潔等作品中的女性獲救之路 [Mainland Chinese women writer's whisper and odium – The road of female salvation in Wang Angyi, Tie Ning, Zhang Jie's works]. *Zhong guo shi bao: Kai juan* 中國時報: 開卷 [The China Times]. (3rd December 1993). (See Xu 142).

[2] See *Analects of Confucius*, chapter 11, section 2.

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